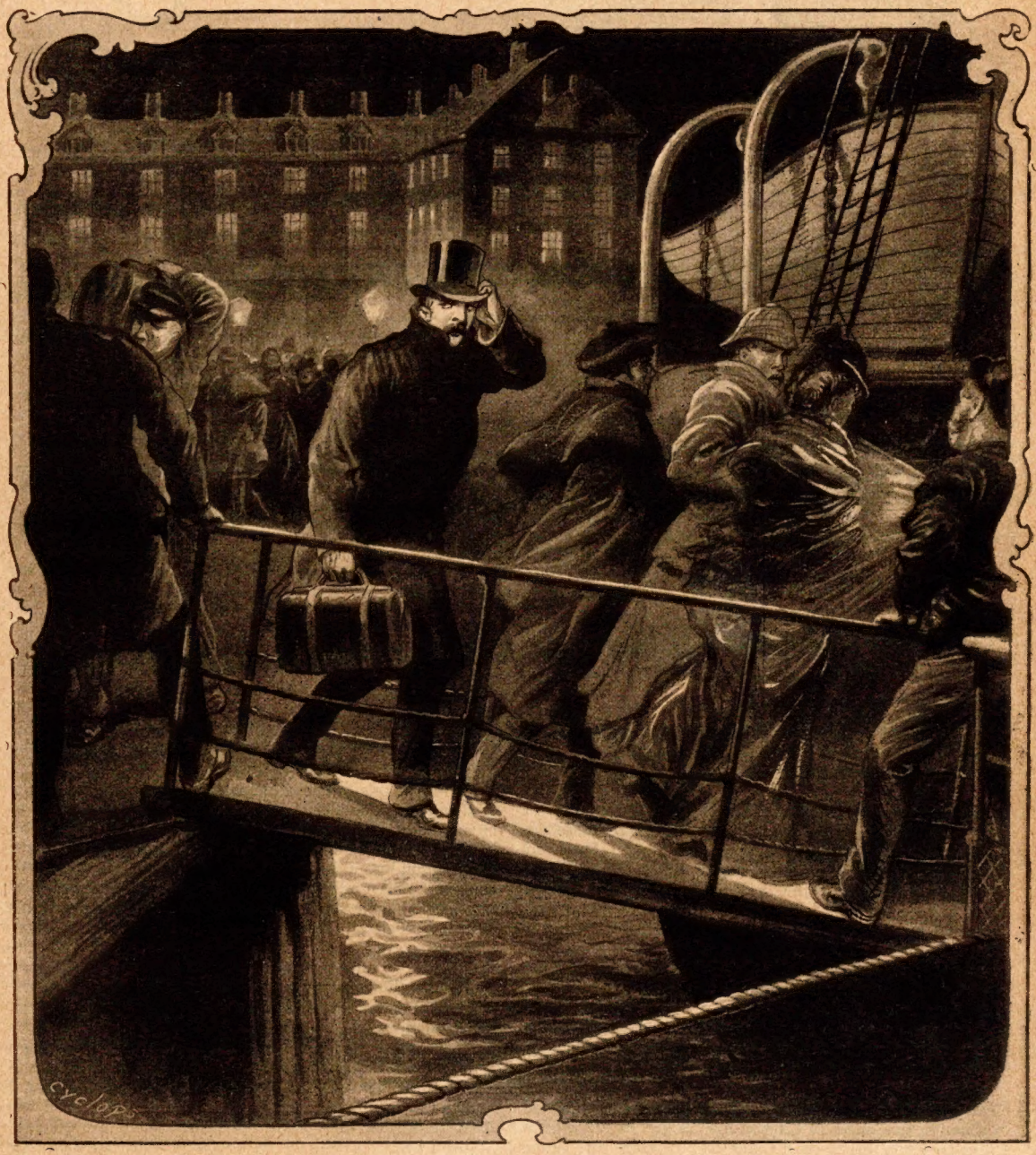
POLICE BUDGET EDITION

EDITED BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE PENNY



BIDWELL'S FLIGHT TO IRELAND—EMBARKING AT HOLYHEAD.

Vol. VIII.—No. 94.

The BIDWELL FORGERIES.

Life Work and Punishment of George Bidwell, who robbed the Bank of England of £250,000.

"'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill;
For, Vice or Virtue, Self directs it still."
—ALEXANDER POPE, "Essay on Man."

PART II.

REJOICING that he had carried off the first transaction so successfully, Mr. Hooker drove to the first station outside Bordeaux, on the Marseilles line, and took the train for that city. To make sure that the money was in safe hands, George had arranged with Engles that, as soon as he received any of the cash, he should transmit it to "H. Cowper, Queen's Hotel, London," at which place Engles was to call every morning and ask for the letters. This was done on Bidwell's part, but Engles, though a first-rate criminal, was a terrible coward, and never called for the proceeds of the forgeries.

Arrived at Marseilles, Hooker went at once to the business premises of Lamare et Cie, and having received the letter addressed to himself, commenced to talk business. M. Lamare was most affable, and took him straightway to his own bank, where after a little delay, during which horrible thoughts of discovery and the French galleys flitted through the swindler's mind, £2,500 were handed to him, and he departed to Arles on the way to Lyons. From the little town he sent a telegram to himself, c/o. Messrs. Phillippe Frères, Lyons, as follows:

"T. Hooker.—Bring sixty thousand francs to Arles at once. I have completed the purchase.—C. E. HOOKER."

Catching the midnight train at Arles, Bidwell went on to Lyons, and reached there at nine in the morning. Here the whole scheme was nearly upset by an oversight. The head of the firm handed him the letter and the telegram. Hooker sat down near the desk and opened the former, when, to his horror, he found that it contained only a blank sheet of notepaper. For a moment he was staggered, but then he folded it up, and putting it in his pocket, remarked, "I see it is written in sympathetic ink." He then opened the wire, and, after reading it, handed it to the man of business, who immediately took sixty thousand francs from his safe and gave them to the swindler, who was thus again the richer by £2,500, which was immediately despatched to "Cowper."

Having thus got the money, the next thing was to get clear of France, for the fraud was sure to be discovered in a day or two at least. It was too dangerous to go from Lyons to Paris direct, so Hooker took carriage and drove to the next junction towards Marseilles, from there he went by train to another junction, and there caught a through train to Paris, which passed through Lyons late at night.

At Paris he shaved off his beard, and went on by a day train to Arras, a little town thirty miles distant on the Calais line. Thence he caught the boat express and landed safely in London on the following morning. There he learnt that Engles had not been near the hotel for the money, and therefore Bidwell was compelled to go for it himself. The forgers were then burdened with a hundred and sixty thousand francs worth of French money, which it was difficult to get rid of in England, so Engles and a partner were despatched to Paris to get it converted into sovereigns at the various Bureaux de Change. This was safely done, and the brilliant little episode ended.

For a week after the conclusion of this enterprise, Bidwell and Engles were busy preparing forged papers for the former's campaign in South America; then George, accompanied by a new colleague, named Munson, sailed for Rio de Janeiro, and the penman returned to America.

After a pleasant voyage of three weeks, George and his henchman Munson arrived at Rio and prepared their meshes to catch the unwary. During the whole of the voyage they had treated one another as strangers, and when they landed they went to different hotels, only meeting by stealth. The means by which they were proposing to rob the South Americans was similar to that employed by Bidwell in France, namely, by forged letters of credit. On this occasion the papers were supposed to be those of the London and Westminster Bank, and were enhanced copies of the original letter in Bidwell's possession.

Entering one of the principal banks, Munson produced his forged introductions and also his equally false letters of credit, and making out a bill of exchange on the London bank, sold it to the Brazilian bankers, and having drawn ten thousand pounds, he left the balance—some £5,000—standing to his credit. The £10,000 were at once converted into English money and done up in bags for transport. This first success elated the partners, and with their forged documents they felt confident that they could easily get the £60,000 that they wanted as recompense for the long journey. Two days later Munson again called on the banker, and was immediately asked into his private room. Mr. Solomons, the principal, explained that a short time previously they had received a letter from the London and Westminster Bank, directing that in future all letters and circular credit notes should be signed by both the manager and the assistant manager, but that the one presented two days before had only been signed by one of the officials. Munson began to feel a little uncomfortable, and said that it must have been an oversight. He had other letters from the same bank, and felt sure that they were signed properly.

He then proposed a further sale of bills of exchange,

but Solomons would not hear of it, and the forger said that if that was the case he would have to transfer his account to the English Bank at Rio. In those days the cable had not been completed, and it would take at least six weeks for an answer as to the genuineness of the bills to be established.

When he left the bank, he went to a meeting-place and saw Bidwell, who realised that only a very bold stroke could save them from being imprisoned in one of the Brazilian infernos. Forcing Munson to swallow some brandy to steady him, he made him sit down and forge the assistant manager's signature on the other letters of credit, and then take them back to Mr. Solomons without losing a moment. The banker was much astonished to see that apparently a mistake had been accidentally made, and transferred the endorsement to one of the doubly-signed letters. He refused, however, to buy any more English money. This refusal confirmed Bidwell in his suspicion that the game was up, and his one thought then was to get Munson with the gold out of the country as soon as possible.

By Brazilian law, no one was then allowed to leave the country without having his passport viséd by the police authorities. The document had then to be left with the ticket agent, who returned it to the passenger, through the purser, when he was on board. This made it almost a matter of impossibility for anyone who was suspected to quit the country. However, Bidwell was rarely at a loss for an expedient. He had in his possession an American passport, made out in the name of Gilmore, which was his Rio name. This he took to the police headquarters, and by greasing the palms of the officials, got it viséd without having a personal interview with the chief constable.

His next move was to deposit the precious paper with a ticket agent and buy a ticket to Liverpool, alleging that he had finished the object of his journey, and was anxious to get home again as quickly as possible. Then he went to the most northern boundary of the quay and hired a boat with good rowers and went out to the "Livingstonia," the next mail steamer. Seeing the purser, he arranged that he should have a stateroom all to himself, and having made perfectly certain that he could easily find it again, he returned to Munson. That worthy he instructed to call casually at the bank and tell the manager that he was going to spend a few days at St. Romao, a town some distance inland. He was then to pay his hotel bill and say that he was leaving Rio next morning by the four o'clock train.

That same night Bidwell met Munson, and in a moment saw that he was being shadowed by a detective. At three next morning the head of the swindling combine called for his colleague in a cab and was much alarmed to learn that Munson had proposed giving a lift to the station to the very man who had been detailed to watch him. Nothing was to be done but to send him a message to the effect that when all the baggage was in the vehicle there was not room for anyone else.

That did not baulk the detective, for he was present on the platform before the train started. The police officer supposed that all his prey's baggage was in the train, but it was not. Just as the engine began to move, Munson stepped out of the carriage on the opposite side of the train and hastily crossed the station, returning to his chief, who was sitting in a cab outside waiting for him. Collecting the gold and fastening it in a knapsack, Bidwell then took Munson down to the quay, and engaged the same boat that he had used on the previous day, and rowed him out to the "Livingstonia." In the bustle and confusion he got him safely on board and stowed away in the stateroom, from which he was not to stir till the ship was well at sea.

At last the vessel began to move, and Bidwell stepped into the boat, which was waiting for him, and was rowed back to the shore. On the way there he passed a rowing-boat, in which were seated Mr. Solomons and a police officer. They were making frantic efforts to attract the attention of the commander of the mail steamer, but failed to do so.

Munson and the gold once clear of Brazil, Bidwell was able to breathe freely again, and passed a very pleasant fortnight waiting for the arrival of the next steamer, on which he eventually reached Marseilles and proceeded immediately to Paris, where Munson was waiting for him with the booty. There they were met by McDonald, and they travelled slowly to Vienna. In the lovely city they were delayed for a considerable time by the illness of McDonald, who contracted a species of malarial fever, which George Bidwell subsequently caught. After this the members of the firm returned to London, taking with them Austin Bidwell (or Warren), who had been touring about the Continent while George was away.

Idleness palled on George, and he went to Holland to see if there was any opening for a man of his peculiar talents there. Unfortunately for him, he could not see his way to defrauding the stolid Dutchmen out of a farthing. But it was while at Amsterdam that the incident happened which subsequently led to the idea of perpetrating the fraud on the Bank of England.

Wishing to get hold of some good paper, as well as to have a little experience of the foreign methods of ex-

Forged the assistant manager's signature.

change, George instructed a stockbroker on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange to buy bills for him. He did so, and among others was one drawn on Baring Brothers. This he sent to McDonald to be collected, and was much astonished a few days later to receive a telegram from that astute villain as follows:

"London, November 2, 1872.

"To George Bidwell, Amsterdam.

"Have made a great discovery. Come immediately.
—MAC."

That apparently innocent telegram was the commencement of the "Great Bank Frauds."

Naturally, George Bidwell went over to London by the first boat, and met his colleague and "Warren." The great discovery was this: When the Baring bill was presented the cashier did not pay the money over the counter, but stamped it on the face, "Payable at the London and Westminster Bank." On the stamped bill being taken to the bank, it was cashed without a question. This made

McDonald fancy that by getting hold of some genuine bills and forging copies of them they could draw as much money as they wanted.

George scouted the idea, but at that instant it flashed across his mind that apparently it is not the custom in England to verify the signatures, and that if Baring's bills were bandied about from hand to hand without being sent to the acceptors to be initialled at each transfer, then probably other bills would be treated in the same manner. Here, then, was an opportunity to make use of the Warren account then standing at the Western Branch of the Bank of England. All that had to be done was to prepare a goodly collection of imitation bills and deposit them in the Bank of England for discounting through the Warren account. After thinking the matter over for a short time, George told his scheme to Austin and McDonald, and they agreed that all the money they could lay their hands on should be immediately given to Warren to be placed to his account, with a view of establishing sound relations with

MAKING FRANTIC EFFORTS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION.

the great bank. The same day George telegraphed to E. Noyes, an American sharp, at New York, asking him to come over by the first steamer.

It was necessary to have two banks to enable Bidwell and his fellow-conspirators to play the game they wished to, and accordingly Austin opened an account in the name of C. J. Horton, at the Continental Bank, and deposited £1,300 as a first instalment. Then began a series of cheques, drawn on the Warren account, being passed into the Horton balance, and vice-versâ, to establish confidence. The next little move was to buy several genuine bills, and have them sent to the Bank of England for discounting.

It did not take very long for the banks to realise that Horton was doing considerable business.

The genuine bills which had been bought were covered with endorsements of every kind, written and stamped, and Bidwell determined that the bogus bills of exchange should bear similar proofs of the bona fides. Accordingly, he got out the collections of inks which he had made while on the Continent, and concerning which he had been repeatedly chaffed by his companions. Now they saw how handy these would come in, and rejoiced that they would be able to imitate the ink used as well as the signatures. To copy the stamps, a series of wood blocks were required, and McDonald was sent to Paris to fetch them, it not being wise to have them made in London. Mac was away for three or four days, and then returned with the astonishing statement that there were no wood engravers in Paris.

George Bidwell was much annoyed at this, but believed his colleague, and set out himself to interview the engravers of London. Out of fifty that he spoke to he selected four whom he thought were simple folks, and gave them the orders. He was right in his estimate of character, for not one of them suspected in the least that the blocks were required for nefarious purposes.

While this was being done, Noyes arrived in London, and saw Bidwell. He was told that the latter was operating on the Stock Exchange, and that he was wanted to take the place of a clerk. No inkling of the plot was given him, and he was merely bound to do just what he was told and to ask no questions. Indeed, when the real frauds commenced he did not even know where his masters lived. He was appointed to assist Horton in his dealings with the Continental Bank, and was introduced to that establishment in his new character. To cover himself and to protect Noyes, a regular agreement was drawn up by Bidwell, which was duly signed in the presence of a solicitor of the name of Howell, who afterwards figured largely in the case.

It was then the end of December, 1872, and the time for commencing operations was close at hand. George Bidwell insisted that his brother Austin should leave England and return to America, lest he should be involved too deeply in the matter, and, in case of failure, to look after the relatives of the conspirators. At first Austin refused to go, but was eventually persuaded, and went across to France. On the day of his landing he was involved in a railway accident, and narrowly escaped a shocking death. All criminals are superstitious, and that determined him to leave the project to his brother to carry through. At the

same time, he married a young lady, to whom he had been engaged for a short time, and the pair went through Spain on their honeymoon, and thence sailed to Havana.

Austin once out of the way, George commenced to manufacture forged bills of exchange. These were made in McDonald's chambers in St. James's Street. The first batch was only for £4,500, and they were sent to Colonel Francis, the manager of the West-end Branch of the Bank of England, from Birmingham, accompanied by a letter forged in Warren's handwriting. It was requested that the bills might be discounted, and the proceeds placed to Warren's account. In a day or two word came to the effect that the matter had been arranged, and then Warren cheques were forged and passed into the Horton account at the Continental by Noyes. As soon as the money for them was obtained, United States Bonds were bought with it, and the securities sent out of the kingdom.

The first venture being so successful, bolder flights were attempted, and hardly a day passed without the operation being repeated, or bills being prepared for the following day's use. During the months of January and February the income of the Syndicate averaged little less than £10,000 per day!

On February 25, the partners held a consultation, and discussed whether they should close their business or do one more bill. After a good deal of talk, they decided to have one more plum from the bank's orchard, and paper to the value of £20,000 was prepared and forwarded from Birmingham. In due course came the welcome intelligence that the bills had been discounted, and Bidwell went to London to receive the money. Almost the whole sum was drawn from the Bank of England and transferred to the Continental, and a large portion of it used to purchase more securities. Everything was ready for the gang to leave for the States on the following day, but the "criminal error" had crept into the calculation.

When bills of exchange are sent to the Bank of England, they are given in bundles to certain clerks to be examined and entered in ledgers prior to being transferred to the vaults to await the date when they fall due. One of the clerks engaged in this work picked out a couple of bills which had been forwarded from the West-end Branch and laid them aside, noticing that the date of acceptance was not marked on them. After the day's work was done orders were given that the bills should be sent to B. W. Blydenstein, whose name appeared as acceptor, and they were at once returned as forgeries. This was on March 1. Scotland Yard and Bow Street were instantly informed, and officers attended at the bank, where a discussion was held.

At that very moment Noyes was engaged in collecting the last lot of money for Bidwell, who was waiting in Garraway's Tavern. The pseudo clerk did not come quite as quickly as Bidwell expected, and he strolled out to see if he was coming. What was his astonishment to see Noyes in the custody of two constables, being taken to the Mansion House!

As soon as one of the party was arrested, Bidwell went to McDonald's rooms, and destroyed every scrap of paper with the exception of a piece of blotting paper, which Mac said he wanted to use in a few minutes. That same day the Scotchman made the fatal mistake which cost him his liberty. Instead of remaining quietly in his lodgings till the storm had blown over, he suddenly fled, leaving the piece of blotting paper behind him. These two acts connected him with the frauds.

An hour after he had changed his lodgings he saw Bidwell, and told him that he had moved for safety. Bidwell pointed out to him the error he had made, and made an appointment to meet him at six that evening. At that hour Mac was on his way to Liverpool, having left word that he had gone to Dover. From Liverpool he went to Chester, thence to Taunton and Southampton. From there he crossed to Havre, where he managed to get on board the "Thuringia," and thus escaped to New York.

Noyes was taken on his arrest to the Mansion House, where the charge of conspiring with persons unknown to obtain £4,500 from the Bank of England was opened in camera, and the prisoner remanded till the 7th of the month. On that day a few of the particulars of the gigantic fraud were made known, but the original charge against Noyes was not extended, but was altered to obtaining the sum of £4,500 by means of forged documents. Dr. Kenealy defended him, and tried hard to show that the prisoner had only done the ordinary duty of a clerk, and could not be held to be responsible. This might have saved Noyes if the police had not obtained information which they were not at the time ready to disclose.

After the flight of McDonald, Bidwell waited in London for a short time, and then made up his mind to get out of the country. Knowing that every person who took a ticket for America would be watched at the English ports, he determined to go across to Ireland and then get on board the White Star liner "Atlantic" at Queenstown, and thus cross to New York. He reached Dublin viâ Holyhead, and thence took the train to Cork, feeling fairly safe. He would

In the custody of two constables.

not have been so comfortable had he known that every Irish paper contained a description of himself together with a reward for any information that might lead to his capture.

On arrival at Cork he noticed two detectives loitering outside the station. One of them spoke to him and asked him if he had ever been in the place before. Bidwell replied "Yes," and walked slowly on. The "'tec" followed him for a little distance, and then returned to speak to his companion. Later on, however, he caught him up and shadowed him. The fugitive walked quietly to the quay from which the American steamers embark their passengers. The place was crowded, and on turning his head he saw his detective friends behind him. That alarmed him, and it was clear that it would be sheer madness to attempt to go on board, so Bidwell stood looking at the passengers getting their luggage on the tug, and then continued his walk. When he got some little distance from the wharf he took a cab and told the jarvey to drive him a mile along the railway.

Thinking that he might elude the vigilance of the detectives, George took a ticket at Queenstown Station, and on jumping into a carriage was astonished to see his two sha-

dowers sitting h it. A few minutes' ride brought him back to Cork, and then he hastened to the railway station on the Dublin line, some quarter of a mile from the Cork and Queenstown one, to inquire for a telegram. In the telegraph office he again found the two detectives.

Then commenced an exciting pursuit. The police officers were determined not to allow their man to evade them, and he was just as determined to give them the slip. Through the most crowded thoroughfares the chase went. At last, by turning three or four corners in rapid succession, Bidwell managed to shake the hounds off, and sought refuge in a little temperance hotel.

Next morning the forger took a cab and drove out to make some small purchases, and as he went past the post office he saw one of his enemies standing at the door looking for him. Believing that there might be a letter him, he wrote to the postmaster authorising him to deliver any letters addressed to Bodell to the bearer, and sent this by a cabman. When cabby returned, he was followed by the detectives. The driver waited in the street, but the was being searched for, and by his blarney obtained a lift in the mail-cart back to Clonmel, where he went to the railway station. While waiting for the train, he was addressed by the local policeman, who apologised for questioning him, and told him of the London forgery. Bidwell commended the man for doing his duty, and declared that he was not in the least offended, then got on the train and reached Dublin in safety. In the capital George posed as a Frenchman, and after a run from the detectives, got a carriage and drove out ten miles on the road to Belfast, thence monsieur took a ticket to Drogheda, where he coaxed two fellow-passengers to buy a ticket for him to Belfast, pleading that he could not speak English well enough. At Belfast "Monsieur Beedweel" managed to get on board the Glasgow steamer just as two detectives came to examine the passengers. His French manner, however, deceived them, and they went away. From Glasgow, Bidwell went to Edinburgh, where he passed as a German for one day, and then took rooms in Cumberland Street. There he remained till the 3rd of April under the name of Coutant. On that day he was recognised by

SAW HIS DETECTIVE FRIENDS BEHIND HIM.

officers walked on, so Bidwell changed his hat for a cap and slipped out when the police had just gone past. Catching the cabman, he was driven rapidly to the canal wharf, where he dismissed the cab and in its place took a jaunting car, on which he got out of Cork. Twelve miles from the scene of danger, George stopped at a little wayside inn, and waited there for the day, amusing himself in making the carman uproariously drunk to prevent him from getting back to Cork till late.

After dark he walked two miles into Fermoy, and there took ticket for Lismore, as that was about the last place that the police would expect him to go to. It was at Lismore that he first learnt that his name was known, and that the hue and cry was out after him. Early next morning he managed to get a car and drove to Clonmel. There he hired another vehicle and went on to Cahir, the police being on the qui vive in every town through which he passed. At Cahir, Bidwell was forced to take refuge in a ruin for two hours, during which time he heard inquiries being made for him, and late in the evening got on the soft side of an Irishman by telling him that he was a Fenian leader who Detective M'Kelvie, who captured him after an exciting chase.

He was taken to London and charged at the Mansion House, and remanded to Newgate pending the capture of the other accomplices.

Austin Bidwell, as we have said, went to Havana with his young bride. There was no difficulty in finding him, and he was arrested, at the request of the British Government. At that time no Extradition Treaty with Cuba existed, but for all that the Spaniards detained Austin and eventually handed him over to the detectives who were sent out from England to take charge of him, and in course of time he joined his brother at the Mansion House bar.

As for the fourth partner, information was sent to the head of the New York police that McDonald was wanted in connection with the great forgery case, and mentioning that he was taking with him a large number of valuable securities. At the same time an order was sent to the Supreme Court asking that a warrant might be served on McDonald.

In those days the police of America were as corrupt

as possible, and there was a regular race between the sheriff and the detectives as to who should first catch Mac and relieve him of the greater portion of his property before the official search took place. The detectives won by a short head, and the official examination of McDonald's belongings only yielded about £2,000 in gold and a few valuable diamonds.

From March 20 till June 5 a legal battle was waged in New York as to whether McDonald should be extradited or not. In the end it was decided that he must be given up to the detested Britishers, and he was sent on board the "Minnesota," bound for Liverpool.

Thus at last the quartette were captured, and the prosecution was able to have them put to the bar together. Mr. Freshfield was the solicitor to the Bank of England, and when first George Bidwell was arrested he employed Mr. Lewis—now Sir George—but was persuaded by Howell, the shady practitioner whom we have mentioned before, to take away his papers from Lewis and give them to himself, who had been entrusted by Noyes with his defence. Curious as it may appear, the clever forger did not see through the pettifogging lawyer's device, and dismissed his excellent adviser, accepting the services of one who was far from respected in the profession.

Captured him after an exciting chase.

Howell was not at all anxious to prove his client's innocence; all he was really concerned about was to obtain possession of as much of the booty as possible. This, by the most bare-faced robbery, he managed to do; but he had an awkward obstacle to overcome before he could feel secure with his ill-gotten gains. John Bidwell, the principal prisoner's eldest brother, came over from America to look after the interests of his two brothers, and Howell felt sure that he would insist in scrutinising the bill of costs and requiring a strict account of all the moneys. It was, therefore, imperative to get John out of the light before the time came for action, and to this end he devised a beautiful plot. It was as follows:

The victim was peculiarly anxious to secure the escape of his brothers, and it was hinted by Howell to several warders that it was quite possible for them to make a little money by proposing to John to allow their prisoners to escape. The warders approached John Bidwell, and he parted with three hundred pounds readily enough. The proposed plan of escape was then communicated by all three warders to the prisoners, and George Bidwell, wishing to make sure that his brother was not being robbed, told Howell in confidence, and asked him to see that the matter was properly carried through. Howell promised to do so, and to see that no one knew anything about the matter. To ensure this, he went at once to Mr. Jones, the Governor of Newgate, and told him all about the matter, coaxing him to find some means by which the three hundred pounds might be restored to him, and his name kept out of the affair.

Jones agreed to do this, and by a round-about method got hold of the money, which was given to Howell, who at once told John Bidwell that he must instantly fly the country to avoid arrest for conspiracy. John believed this, and departed to Paris before the conclusion of the trial; therefore, Howell was able to secure all of the prisoners' property on which he could lay his hands, and retain it unquestioned. Some years later this paragon of honesty attempted a similar coup, and, being caught, was struck off the Rolls.

Twenty-three times did the four forgers appear at the Mansion House, and were then sent to the Old Bailey. The court was crowded; in fact, for the moment the men who had successfully relieved the Bank of England of its money were almost as popular as a brutal murderer, and ladies thronged to see them. For eight days the trial dragged on, the facts elicited being those which we have detailed, with the exception that there were several discrepancies which the counsel for the prosecution had to guess at and which were never discovered till many years later. Noyes was held to be as culpable as his masters, although he really was perfectly in the dark as to what was being done. In the end all four were found guilty, and sentenced to penal servitude for life, truly a severe sentence for Noyes and Austin Bidwell, but none too heavy for Mac and George.

The detectives deserve great credit for their work, since Noyes refused to give them the slightest information, and George Bidwell had kept in the background throughout the whole plot.

While in prison, Bidwell found that the food did not agree with him, and asked to be put on penal diet. This the doctor said he was unable to do; so Bidwell made a bogus attempt to escape by taking out two bricks from a flue which passed through his cell. The prison authorities were in possession of the particulars of his flight from Wheeling, and regarded this as a genuine scheme to regain liberty; so he was sentenced to six months' irons. The punishment was so severe that Bidwell broke down under it, and for five years never left his cell. Then he recovered a little, and was carried to the work-rooms, but again broke down, and spent the remainder of his time in prison in solitude. After fifteen years he was liberated, and sent back to America, a cripple. The other three conspirators served twenty years, and were then let out on ticket of leave.

Thus ended the greatest forgery conspiracy that has ever taken place. The Bank of England never divulged exactly how much was stolen from them, but it is estimated that a quarter of a million at least was irretrievably lost.

That Fifty!

A man named Norman Ross was hanged many years ago for a dreadful series of murders committed in South Wales. He had killed the inmates of a certain house and set fire to it after plundering the various rooms, but in his hurry and excitement he had left behind a box containing about £50. This omission appeared to worry him.

"You're a nice sort of man," said one of the warders after he was condemned to death; "you don't seem a bit sorry for what you have done."

"No," said the miscreant, still thinking of the £50 he might have had, "I'm sorry for what I left undone!"

The Poisoning of a Child by Edwin Bailey and Ann Barry.

"Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, seared and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed."
—SCOTT, "Marmion," Canto II.

FOR nearly forty years no woman had been executed at Gloucester Gaol, that is to say from 1836 till the year 1874. On the 9th of April, 1836, Harriet Tarver was hanged for murder, and until Ann Barry was executed on the 12th of January, 1874, only males had undergone the last dread penalty of the law there.

The crime for which Ann Barry and Edwin Bailey were hanged was for poisoning an illegitimate child of the male prisoner's, the circumstances under which the dreadful crime was committed being as follows:

Edwin Bailey and Ann Barry were found guilty of causing the death of Sarah Jenkins by poison—the prisoner Bailey as the principal in the offence, and Barry as an accessory before the fact. The evidence was entirely circumstantial. The deceased child was the illegitimate daughter of Mary Susan Jenkins, and Bailey was the putative father, an order of affiliation having been made upon him in December, 1872, and from that time to the death of the child he continued to pay five shillings weekly. The other prisoner, Ann Barry, was during all that time in Bailey's employment, and a short time after Christmas, 1872, Barry, by false pretexts, sought the acquaintance of the mother and grandmother of the child, and from that time until a day or two before its death she continued frequently to visit the house, and was sometimes there as often as twice a week. She manifested considerable interest in the child, asking at different times to be allowed to take it out, and upon one occasion to be allowed to take it to nurse. She explained her fondness for the child by saying that the little thing reminded her of a child of her own which she had lost at Brighton. During one of these visits Barry asked the mother what medicine she was in the habit of giving the child, and, upon being told magnesia, said that "Steedman's Soothing Powders" were preferable. On another occasion she spoke of the "Dorcas Society," and said something which led the mother of the child to expect that some lady visitor connected with that society would send her something. Barry also inquired more than once about the father of the infant.

About the middle of August, 1873, the woman, in the course of one of her visits, asked Jenkins if she had heard of the lady visitor of the Dorcas Society, and, receiving an answer in the negative, remarked that no doubt she (Jenkins) would find a friend in her yet. A letter arrived by post on August the 13th, which was found to contain three powders labelled "Steedman's Soothing Powders," and a shilling's worth of postage stamps. The missive also contained these words: "From the lady visitor of Cotham Dorcas Society, who will send a few things for the child to wear in a day or two," and was signed "Jane Isabella Smith." Barry called again the next day, and was told about the letter having come, and as she quitted the house she said she would not be able to call again, for she was going to remove to a distant part of Bristol. A letter was written and addressed to Miss Jane Isabella Smith, "the lady visitor," but it was returned a few days afterwards through the Dead Letter Office, both name and address being fictitious. Three days afterwards, the child being poorly, one of the powders sent in the letter was mixed with some of its food by its grandmother and given to it. In less than ten minutes the infant was a corpse. The police being informed of the circumstances, the two remaining powders were analysed, and found to be composed of vermin powder, which contained strychnine. An inquest was held on the child, and adjourned for the appearance of Bailey, and he was bound over to appear at the second adjourned coroner's inquiry. In the interval, however, he left Bristol, and did not appear when called upon. There were many suspicious circumstances regarding him brought out at the inquest. He had been in the habit of sending his remittances to the mother of the child through the police at Horfield, and some of his letters still remained in their possession. Upon a comparison being made between one of these letters and that in which the poisoned powders had been sent, it was found that the envelopes resembled each other in size, make, water-mark, and stamp. But the damning proof was found in the handwriting, which, upon examination of the two letters by M. Chabot, the famous expert in caligraphy, was found to be identical. At the conclusion of the inquest the jury returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against Edwin Bailey, and he was committed for trial on the coroner's warrant, on Tuesday, September 23. On the following day, Wednesday, Barry was arrested, and together with Bailey was examined before the magistrates at Lawford's Gate and committed for trial, Bailey on the capital charge, and Barry for being an accessory before the act.

The prisoners were tried at the Gloucestershire Winter Assizes, before Mr. Justice Archibald, on Monday, December 22, 1873. Mr. J. J. Powell, Q.C., and Mr. Gough, appeared for the prosecution; Mr. Sawyer defended Bailey, and Mr. Griffiths was counsel for Barry. The trial occupied two days, and the evidence of the twenty-one witnesses called for the prosecution fully proved that the murder of the child had been planned by Bailey and carried out by the woman Barry. The female prisoner made the following statement: "I was working for Mr. Edward Bailey, and I was often sent on errands to different places, and Mr. Bailey sent me several times to the house where the illegitimate child of Mary Jenkins was kept, for the purpose, if possible, to get some tidings as to who was the real father of the child, as he positively asserted it was not his, as he had nothing at all to do with her, and his object being to take it to a higher court; but as to anything about the poison, I know nothing about it."

The county analyst, Mr. John Horsley, said that he analysed one of the powders handed to him and which had been sent to the child's mother as already mentioned. The powders were not "Steedman's Soothing Powders"; they were "Vermin Killers." Steedman's powders were composed of half a grain of calomel, a little sugar and cornflour. Its weight was 2¼ grains; the powder he examined was double the weight. He examined the stomach of the deceased child and found about a tumbler full of sopped bread therein, with a little blue colour diffused through it. It was the same colour as the powder he had analysed. He found no strychnine, and could not arrive at the cause of death.

Dr. Parsons, who was called in by Mrs. Jenkins, the child's grandmother, to attend to deceased when it was taken ill after having had the powder administered, said he found the child dead on his arrival at the house, but not quite cold. He made a post-mortem examination of the body, but could not say that death had resulted from poisoning by strychnine.

After the judge had summed up, the jury retired to consider their verdict at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the second day of the trial, and were in consultation till five minutes to six. On their return a verdict of "Guilty" was given against both prisoners who had been replaced in the dock.

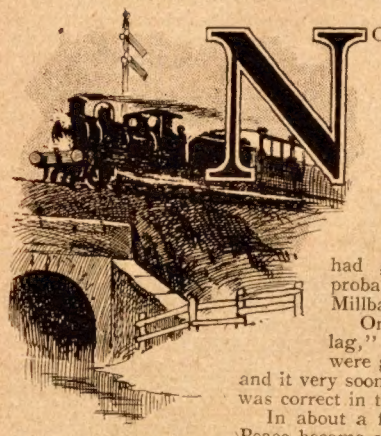
The Clerk of Arraigns: "Edwin Bailey and Ann Barry, you severally stand convicted of wilful murder. Have you anything to say why the Court should not adjudge you to die according to law?"

Bailey (calmly): "I know nothing of it. Gentlemen, it is a conspiracy. I never wrote the letter. It is not the first time my handwriting has been forged. As far back as January my handwriting was forged."

His lordship then assumed the black cap, and pronounced sentence amid breathless silence in the following terms: "Edwin Bailey and Ann Barry, you have been convicted of the awful crime of murder. You, Edwin Bailey, murdered the child whom you were legally bound to support. On the part of both of you the crime you have been found guilty of is one which you carried out with great deliberation and premeditation. You had ample opportunities during the stages to repent and turn from your wicked purpose, but instead of doing so you carried it out to the extreme end, causing the death of the child. The very artfulness with

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER LXXI.—(*Continued.*)



NOTHING after this disturbed the dull, dry monotony of his prison life, but as the year was drawing to a close he daily got more and more anxious to know what penal establishment he was to be drafted to after he had gone through his probationary term at Millbank.

One man, "an old lag," said the next batch were going to Chatham, and it very soon transpired that he was correct in this surmise.

In about a fortnight after this Peace became acquainted with the station to which he was to be drafted.

While dinners were being served the chief warder said to him:

"8642, collect all your letters together. Tie up your work, and put all your flannels on."

"Going away, sir?" said Peace

"Yes," returned the warder.

"Where to, sir?"

"Prisoners must not ask questions—it's against the rules."

"I shall know soon enough, I daresay," growled Peace.

"Well, Chatham, if you must know," exclaimed the warder.

"Thank ye, sir; I'm much obliged. I'm sorry to leave, though."

"Daresay you are. There, no more words. Pass on."

Peace now knew that the end of his quiet, though solitary, time was about to be brought to a close.

He dreaded very much being brought into daily and hourly contact with some of the ruffians and blackguards he had been able to keep at a respectful distance while at Millbank, but there was no help for it.

The batch had to finish the remainder of their respective sentences at Chatham.

Thirty of them soon found themselves in the same corridor in which they had been received upon first entering Millbank, and, after the usual formalities had been gone through, they started on their journey, and were soon whirled down by train to their destination.

CHAPTER LXXII.

The commotion created by the marriage of John Ashbrook and Patty Jamblin had long since subsided, and the bride and bridegroom returned to the old farmhouse.

The usual amount of visits were paid, and the "happy pair" were suffered to settle down into their own natural, unobtrusive mode of life.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chicknell had been very busy in the Divorce Court for the purpose of obtaining a decree nisi in the case of Gatliffe v. Gatliffe. The reader will remember that we left Aveline and Lady Marvlynn together discussing the all-important question in a previous chapter.

It appeared that the earl's granddaughter, however, had a will of her own. She would not consent to be made a mere puppet in the hands of others, and after her interview with Lady Marvlynn she reconsidered the matter, and boldly declared that the suit should not proceed.

When the lawyer arrived he was made acquainted with the nature of the commission imposed upon him, to which he at once acceded.

The earl went out to pay a visit to a neighbour. Mr. Chicknell sought the Lady Aveline, who consented to receive him in her own apartment.

After much bowing and scraping, the astute attorney consented to bring himself to an anchorage on the soft velvet seat of a carved oak chair.

After a preliminary cough, he began as follows: "This little business which the earl, your grandfather, is so anxious to get settled, is at present in statu quo, the reason being the disinclination on the part of your ladyship to act in concert with his legal advisers, and I have, therefore, my dear madam, taken upon myself the not very pleasant task of seeing you on the subject. I have felt it a duty incumbent on me to learn your wishes with regard to the pending suit from your own lips. Am I right when I say that it was first instituted with your full consent?"

"Certainly not. I never did give my consent."

"Dear me, that's most unfortunate; but as we have proceeded thus far, I presume you won't offer any opposition. You certainly ought not to do so."

"Indeed! I claim to be the best judge in this matter, and do not care to be made a mere puppet in the hands of others. Pray, why ought I to give my consent?"

"Well, as your ladyship has put the question so plainly, I am bound to answer it. In the first place, I do not think you would be justified in opposing Earl Ethalwood's expressed wishes, and in the next——" He paused.

"And in the next?" cried Aveline.

"You are quite justified in getting rid of a man who has brought such discredit on you and yours."

Aveline rose from her seat, her eyes flashing with indignation, and her whole manner was indicative of the most violent emotion.

"And pray, Mr. Chicknell," said she, "who has deputed you to make such a statement? In what way has my husband brought discredit on me and mine? I have yet to learn that he has done aught to disgrace either himself or me."

"You must pardon me, madam," said the lawyer, in no way moved by the anger of his companion. "We professional gentlemen have, at times, very unpleasant revelations to make, but I would not—nay, nothing could induce me to press a question which, possibly, you have no desire to hear."

"I do not quite understand you, sir. But you have my full permission to proceed. Pray go on."

"My dear young lady," said Chicknell, in oleaginous accents, "you must learn the truth. Your husband is living in open adultery with a woman of more than doubtful repute. The fact is established. We have indubitable proof of it."

Aveline turned pale, trembled slightly, and sank into a chair.

She made, however, no reply.

"You have heard what I have said?" said the lawyer, in continuation. "Indubitable proofs! If you doubt this I will bring an officer who will convince you of the fact."

Still no reply.

"Mr. Gatliffe is, at the present time, living with a lady of the name of Laura Stanbridge."

Aveline leaned forward, placed her elbows on the table, and, burying her face in her hands, she burst into a passionate flood of tears. Her hysterical sobs touched the heart of the lawyer, who placed his hand kindly on one of her shoulders, and standing over her, said in a sympathetic tone of voice:

"My dear Lady Aveline, I cannot express to you the sorrow I feel at seeing you thus borne down. Believe me, nothing but the imperative necessity of making the revelation has induced me to be thus outspoken."

"You have said enough, Mr. Chicknell. You have convinced me. I feel hurt. My pride is wounded, but I shall not offer any opposition to the proceedings you have taken at the instigation of the earl, my grandfather."

"Do you think that I have sought you for the purpose of maligning the man who is at the present moment your lawful husband."

"Enough, sir," interrupted the unhappy wife. "It will suffice for our purpose that you bring the suit to as speedy a termination as possible."

"It shall be done, madam, as speedily as possible. Do not let this unfortunate business cause you any anxiety."

They shook hands, and the lawyer took his departure, very well satisfied with the result of the interview.

In the course of a few weeks the divorce was obtained without opposition on the part of Gatcliffe, and Lord Ethalwood felicitated himself upon the fulfilment of the crowning wish of his life.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

We must pass over the period of Peace's incarceration as a convict, and take up his history from the time of his discharge.

As the long-looked-for day began to approach, the prisoner, as is usual in such cases, was permitted to grow his hair.

Three months' permission is given for this purpose; the regular once-a-week "clip" is no longer insisted on, as the prisoner has become what in common parlance is termed "a permissive man."

As the weeks pass by the hair grows. Peace had never at any time an abundant crop, and at this period he was nearly bald. Nevertheless, the few straggling hairs he had left were suffered to grow their full length.

One fine morning No. 8,642 (George Parker, seven years') was called out on parade. Peace fell out when he heard these welcome words. He was marched before a principal warder and the governor, and interviewed as to his intentions on discharge.

He was asked kindly enough by the governor where he was going to take his discharge to? What occupation he thought of following? If he had a wife, or family, or friends?

Peace said he was desirous of returning to his native town, Sheffield, in which place he had a wife.

A kindly admonition as to his future good conduct was given by the governor, who informed him that a gratuity would be given him upon the day of his release.

But a certain ceremony had to be gone through. Peace was drafted off with a batch of other permissive men to the photographer's room, where the whole party had their cartes de visite taken.

On the Saturday morning preceding the day of liberation, another ceremony had to be gone through. The prisoner is taken to the store-room, called the tailors' cutting-room; here he has to change his clothes, his prison garb is taken off, and, in its stead, a suit of clothes is furnished him, in which he is to enter the world again.

Peace was glad enough to have a new rig out, after which he was marched off by a prison official to an open space of ground adjoining the gaol; at this place some fifteen or twenty persons were assembled. This assembly of persons consisted chiefly of the detective police, who inspect minutely the man who is about to be discharged.

After this Peace was fitted with a pair of boots, and his outfit, if it could be so termed, was now complete. He was informed him he would be presented with a gratuity of three pounds before he went out of the prison.

Any sum would be, of course, acceptable to begin the world again with. Three pounds is not a large capital, it must be admitted, but it is better than nothing.

In the due course of time Peace received a visit from the stewards' clerk, the object being to obtain his signature on a stamped receipt for the whole of the munificent gratuity, and his signature also to several forms which he has to sign without seeing the contents of the aforesaid forms. This is a matter of no very great moment, for if he did peruse them the probability is that he would not be much the wiser.

After this ceremony had been gone through the clerk handed Peace a copy of "Her Majesty's licence to go at large during the remaining portion of his term of penal servitude."

This licence is given subject to the conditions endorsed on the document, upon the breach of any of which it shall be liable to be revoked, whether such conduct is followed by conviction or not.

After he had partaken of the dinner ration served to him, the cell door was unlocked for the Scripture-reader. This gentleman turned to the convict with a benign smile, and said in a soft tone, "And so, Parker, I have to congratulate you that your day of release has arrived. It cannot fail to be most gladly welcomed by you."

"It is," returned Peace.

His visitor handed him a Bible and Prayer-book, and said, "I hope you will profit by a careful study of these. I have, as the rule dictates, written your name, number, and date of your discharge inside the cover. These books are supplied to all convicts on discharge."

The Scripture-reader, after a few more remarks, took his departure, and in the due course of time an orderly officer unlocked the door again and inquired if he was ready.

"I should just think I was," returned Peace, hurriedly finishing his liberty toilette.

"All right—come this way, then," cried the officer.

Peace did not want a second bidding—he was soon outside the cell. The warder placed the hard, round felt wide-awake on his head, and the truly wretched scarecrow, "her Majesty's licence-holder," was hurried to the entrance gates, where more signing was done, and the official copy of the "licence," signed by one of the directors of convict prisons, placed in his hand.

This was the last ceremony he had to go through. He found an officer in prison uniform waiting to conduct him to the railway-station, and the wicket being at length unlocked, the ticket-of-leave man and his conductor passed through.

Peace was once more a free man!

As the two proceeded towards the railway-station, jeers and remarks were made by several passengers, which were in no way complimentary to Peace, but convicts on release have to bear these indignities, which, to say the truth, they are subject to both inside and outside the prison walls.

The officer in charge of Peace presented the governor's order, and obtained a ticket at the same rate as charged for soldiers.

The released convict had by this time regained his confidence. At the request of his conductor he entered the carriage.

The official did not leave him until the train was in motion.

Before reaching Sheffield, Peace found his wife, his mother, and son-in-law awaiting his approach.

The meeting was, of course, an affectionate one, and Peace, with three pounds in his pocket, returned once more to his humble home, where he had "a bit of a jollification," as he termed it, and an indent was made in the three pounds he had brought with him.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

After his return from penal servitude he followed his trade of picture-frame maker with renewed assiduity. He was very careful to duly report himself at the police-station in the district in which he resided, and it appears from all we can gather that the police treated him generally with the greatest consideration, and never hunted him down, as it is termed. Indeed, they had a great reluctance to expose him or interfere in any way with him while following his ordinary avocation.

We have but little to chronicle in respect to Charles Peace from the time of his release up to the year 1876.

Presumably he was following an honest course of life, but we fear this was supplemented by occasional acts of dishonesty and depredation.

He, however, managed to steer clear of the law; and no conviction or even suspicion fell upon him till the year referred to.

It is said that for a short period he opened a provision shop in Hull, and that he left that town suddenly, for what reason does not transpire. After this he was again a picture-frame maker in Darnall.

We now propose following up the record of his career in something like consecutive order, that the reader may fully comprehend the events which ultimately led to his conviction upon the charge of murder.

We have it from reliable authorities that at the time of the Bannercross murder, his mother—Mrs. Jane Peace—lived in Orchard Street, Sheffield, and she had not seen her son Charles—who, by the way, was her favourite son—for two years, on account of a difference arising out of his taking Mrs. Dyson to her house one night in 1874.

The precise date at which his intimacy with Mrs. Dyson commenced does not transpire.

Mrs. Dyson herself, at the Leeds Assizes, spoke to Peace having lived next door but one to her and her husband when they resided in Britannia Road, Darnall, in the earlier part of 1876.

She knew him as a picture-frame maker, and he used to visit the Dysons, and had been, if he was not actually then, on terms of undisputed intimacy with the woman whose husband he afterwards murdered.

Before following the clue to this murder, we must give a brief record of another crime of a similar nature, which happened in the same year.

Without doubt Peace continued his lawless depredations to a great extent while residing at Darnall.

The Whalley Range murder caused great popular excitement.

An innocent man was convicted and was cast for death. He escaped suffering the extreme sentence of the law by almost a miracle.

At the time of the occurrence Peace was there to "work" some houses. He went to a place called Whalley Range.

He had "spotted" a house which he thought he could get into without much trouble.

He was always respectably dressed, so he declared, for

he made a point of dressing respectably, and for this reason he knew the police never think of suspecting one who appears in good clothes.

In this way he threw the police off their guard on many occasions.

On the night of the fatal occurrence Charles Peace, in an easy, careless, jaunty manner, walked leisurely through the streets of Manchester.

He had not at this time his friend Bandy-legged Bill with him, or, indeed, any other companion; but he was a self-reliant man, whose object was to pick up what he could without the aid of a confederate.

While walking through the streets in Manchester he occasionally went between policemen, who were exercising their brains as to the burglar who had "done" some houses there.

Peace laughed in his sleeve. He knew the real culprit, but said nothing.

He took his way towards the house he designed to work, and as he went along he passed two policemen on the road.

THE BALL ENTERED THE OFFICER'S BREAST.

He walked boldly on until he arrived at the house which was to be the scene of his operation.

The house stood in its own grounds, which were inclosed by a wall, and in some parts a shrubbery.

Upon arriving at the place of his destination, he considered for a few moments, and then determined upon his plan of action.

His object was to get into the grounds which surrounded the habitation in the dusk of the evening, and then wait a convenient time to effect an entrance into the house.

There were policemen about whom Peace managed to dodge for a time.

They had, however, observed him, and were, in consequence, on the watch.

This fact he was not aware of; had he been so, the chances are that he would not have made any attempt on the house that night.

He, however, walked into the grounds through the gate, and before he was able to begin his operations, he heard a step and a rustling behind him. He became suddenly alarmed, and turned sharply round, when, to his dismay, he beheld a policeman, whose figure was the same as one of the two he had passed on the road. The constable in question was making the best of his way into the grounds.

He had evidently seen Peace, turned back, and followed.

Peace came to the conclusion that he could not work that night. He therefore doubled, to elude the constable.

For a moment he succeeded, and, taking a favourable opportunity, he endeavoured to make his escape.

With surprising agility he sprang up on the top of the wall which inclosed the grounds, but a fresh misfortune now befell him.

As he was dropping down and had cleared the premises, he almost fell into the arms of a second policeman, who must have been planted in the expectation that he would escape that way.

The policeman made a grab at Peace, who was by this time driven to a state of desperation, for he was under the impression that he would be captured, and then his previous convictions would be brought against him, and he would be sent to penal servitude again.

Peace was nettled that he had been disturbed, and his blood was up and all his worst passions in the ascendant, for he had "spotted" the house for a long time, and it had been a favourite project of his to rifle it of its most valuable and portable contents.

"You stand back, or I'll shoot you!" cried Peace, in a voice of concentrated rage.

But the ill-fated young man was brave, and bent upon doing his duty—such officers are a credit to the force, and cannot be too highly commended—but alas! the poor fellow paid a fearful penalty for his gallant conduct.

He would not stand back and let the burglar pass, so Peace stepped back a few yards and fired wide at him, for the purpose of frightening him; but the brave young fellow was not to be intimidated.

After he had fired wide at the ill-fated young man, Cock, the latter seized hold of his staff, and was evidently bent on capturing the ruffian. He rushed at Peace, whom he was about to strike.

The burglar now saw that he had no time to lose. He was determined not to be captured, and was bent on effecting his escape at all hazards, even if it was at the sacrifice of human life.

He discharged another barrel of his revolver, in the hope of disabling the arm of the officer that held the staff.

The ball entered the unfortunate man's breast, and the poor fellow, with a deep groan, fell to the earth.

Peace managed to make his escape.

Policeman Cock had received his death wound, the bleeding from which was chiefly internal.

His comrades came to his assistance and raised him up, but he was in such acute agony that he begged of them to leave him alone.

He was, however, removed, and very shortly afterwards breathed his last.

Peace got clear off, and no one for a moment suspected that he had any hand in the murder.

Suspicion fell upon some young men in the neighbourhood—the brothers Habron. The police, when once they have fixed their minds upon any theory as to the guilt of a person or persons, cling to it with the utmost pertinacity, as we have seen in the case of Mr. Beck.

The Habrons were aroused from their beds on the fatal night, soon after the commission of the crime of murder.

They slept in a cottage or shed which stood on the grounds, where they worked as gardeners or agricultural labourers, the brothers being in the service of a Mr. Deakin.

William Habron, it was suggested, had threatened to shoot Policeman Cock if he did anything to either him or his brothers; and it was moreover alleged that he had on many occasions displayed great animosity towards the deceased. So the police were under the impression that he was the guilty person. The trial took place in August, 1876.

The principal, perhaps the only, points condemnatory of William Habron when tried were—firstly, his threats uttered against the unfortunate officer; secondly, his going to the shop of Mr. Moore, in order to ask the price of a revolver, and of some ball cartridges; thirdly, that a man wearing a certain shaped coat and hat, similar to those worn by Habron, was seen by two persons near the scene of the murder; and, lastly, the footprint which corresponded with Habron's left boot.

These facts, though circumstantially bearing upon the case in the eyes and minds of the police authorities—eyes that were absolutely prepared, before a single examination took place, to look upon the brothers Habron as the guilty parties—were still too flimsy to any unprejudiced mind to form any solid foundation for placing a man's life in jeopardy, unless well supported by far more grave and weighty evidence.

Indeed, Mr. Justice Lopes, in his charge to the grand jury, pointed out that no firearms had been found in possession of the prisoners, that there was no evidence against John Habron at all, and the only evidence that could be adduced against William was that of wearing a dress similar to that seen, on a dark night, by some persons near the spot, his having used threats, the footprints, and his inquiry for cartridges which he did not purchase.

Mr. Justice Lopes would evidently not have been astonished had the grand jury ignored the bill.

Before commenting on the evidence brought forward under the supervision of Superintendent Bent, it would be just as well to mention one important speech of that officer's, which forms a key at once to his whole working of the case.

He says, "On hearing of the murder I immediately suspected the Habrons."

That Cock was foully murdered none, of course, could doubt; but who fired the fatal shot could not fail to be a matter of serious doubt to any person who read the particulars of the affair in the daily papers whilst the sad event was under investigation.

F. Wilson, a witness on the trial, deposed that John Habron told him that if ever the "Little Bobby" (their nickname for Cock) did anything to either him or his brother he would shoot him.

Mrs. Carter, wife of the landlord of the Royal Oak, said that if the said "Little Bobby" did not stop persecuting him and his brother, they would shunt him through their "gaffer," Mr. Deakin, as he would not be the first policeman they had shunted.

Mrs. Fox gave evidence that John Habron (who was under the necessity of appearing at the police-court on the Monday, to answer the charge of drunk and disorderly conduct preferred by the deceased) said to her, "If he does me to-day I'll do him on Wednesday."

James Brownhill deposed to John's threats to shoot the officer.

The savage threats made by the acquitted John and the expression used by William must have been, to say the least of it, frightfully overrated to bear a construction of murder, but that that construction was put upon it the result of the trial of this ill-used young man shows.

The next point which was supposed to bear upon the guilt of William Habron is that of his having gone to the shop of Mr. Moore, the ironmonger, to ask the price of and to examine some ball-cartridges (the revolvers were brought out and shown him by the shopman, M'Clelland, unasked for).

Here the witness cannot swear whether it was on Monday or Tuesday the transaction occurred.

But he swore to the man, although he had probably never seen him before in his life, nor, in the ordinary way of business, would he take any more notice of him that he would of any other casual customer. And, moreover, the other servants in the shop, although having had the same facilities of recognition, did not think it was the same man, and declined to confirm M'Clelland's statement.

In addition to this, he neither purchased cartridges nor pistol; so that the visit to Mr. Moore's shop, as a piece of evidence, even if made by Habron, is of no value whatever.

The little item of finding two percussion caps, introduced by Superintendent Bent, was evidently a superfluity, as Mr. Deakin, the employer of Habron, says the caps might easily have been in the waistcoat pocket when he gave it to Habron, as he had been using his gun just before, and had probably put some caps in the pocket.

The actual bullet extracted from the body of the unfortunate policeman was pronounced by an experienced gunsmith to have been fired from a No. 442 pin-fire cartridge, which was the largest size but one then made.

The third standpoint in the case made out against William Habron is that of dress and general appearance, which bore a similarity to the dress and general appearance of the man seen near the scene of the murder by two witnesses.

J. M. Simpson, who had been walking and conversing with the deceased, had only just left him when he met this man; he described him as an elderly man, and declared that he walked with a stooping gait.

Police-constable Beanland, whose evidence was perhaps the most important, under present circumstances, in the whole case, said that the man was about twenty-two years of age, and walked quite erect; and from general appearance he thought it must have been William Habron.

The man under notice, says Beanland, went along Seymour Grove to Mr. Greatorex's gate, and he there lost sight of him, and on going to the gate he found it open. He went in at the gate, and examined Mr. Greatorex's premises, but found all right, and then heard two shots, and found the deceased on the ground at West Point.

We next come to that conclusive evidence of Habron's guilt as established by Superintendent Bent—the footprints.

He deposed to the examination of the footprints with great exactitude.

He was totally unable to count the nails in the outside row as they were so closely together, but on the inside row they were thicker nails in one line, and the same number of indentations were visible in the footprints; and there were two middle rows of nails and two nails in the toe; the heel iron was worn, and there were three nails in it.

That Mr. Justice Lindley did not think the evidence conclusive against William Habron, the following conclusion to his summing up will testify. He said: "With regard to William Habron, was there any evidence that he was on the spot where the murder was committed on the night in question? There was the evidence, such as it was, of the witness Simpson and Police-constable Beanland, and they had the evidence of the footprints, and he asked them to satisfy themselves that the impression was the impression of William's left boot. If they were of opinion such impression was not that of William they would have but little difficulty in dealing with the case. If they were, on the contrary, satisfied the impression was made by William's boot, then came the next question: What other evidence is there to show when it was made? For that was a serious conclusion for them to make, because, according to the evidence for the defence, he could not have been there the day previously; and the question was, the print would not have been there if not made recently." He then reviewed the evidence in their favour: Firstly, they were of good character. Secondly, when arrested they were where they ought to have been—in bed. Third, no trace of firearms had been found.

After the verdict the learned judge did not, as is usual, express his concurrence in the jury's opinion, but simply said:

"You have been found guilty of murdering Nicholas Cock, and it is my duty to pass sentence upon you," and again, a few minutes later, "I shall simply discharge my duty by passing sentence upon you."

Notwithstanding the doubt existing after the trial and sentence as to Habron's guilt he had a narrow chance of being hanged, and he would certainly have been doomed to penal servitude for life had not Peace, in a fit of remorse, told the truth about the whole business while under sentence of death in Armley Gaol.

Peace had the audacity and hardihood to be present at the trial of William Habron, and looked complacently on while an innocent man was being condemned to death for a crime he (Peace) had committed.

"Some time afterwards," observed Peace, "I saw it announced in the papers that certain men had been taken into custody for the murder of the policeman Cock. That greatly interested me. I always had a liking to be present at trials, as the public no doubt know by this time, and I determined to be present at this trial. I left Hull for Manchester for two days, not telling my family where I had gone, and attended the assizes at Manchester for two days, and heard the younger of the brothers, as I was told he was, sentenced to death. The sentence was afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life. Now some people say that I was a hardened wretch for allowing an innocent man to suffer for the crime of which I was guilty; but what man could have gone and given himself up under such circumstances, knowing as I did that I should certainly be hanged for the crime?"

CHAPTER LXXV.

Everybody will agree with us when we declare that Peace's acquaintance with the Dysons is altogether incomprehensible.

How he managed to force himself upon these two persons, how he contrived to have so strong a hold on Mrs. Dyson, appears to be the strangest and most inexplicable part of his career.

He persecuted her with a pertinacity which was almost unparalleled.

Whether he was really attached to her it is not possible to say, but it must be admitted that his conduct at this time was more like that of a madman than of a rational being.

Mr. Dyson, the ill-fated gentleman who was murdered in 1876 by the miscreant Peace, was married in 1866 at Cleveland, Ohio, and took a house at Finsbury. From thence he removed to Highfield, afterwards to Heeley, and again to Darnall, and from Darnall they moved to Bannercross Terrace.

There is just a short period of the history and phase in the existence of Mr. Arthur Dyson after his arrival in this country from America, says a fellow-countryman of his, which may not be uninteresting. Soon after his arrival he made application to the resident engineer of the North-Eastern Railway Company at York for employment as a civil engineer and surveyor, and his credentials were of such a character that an engagement was entered into with him. The character of his occupation in America led to the anticipation that he would be able to find "his way about here," and that, in fact, his services might prove to be of a most useful character.

On presenting himself for the purpose of commencing his duties, his personal appearance was the source of considerable curiosity and surprise amongst the remainder of the officials in the engineer's office.

He was extremely thin and singularly tall, measuring over six feet; and he wore a low felt hat, as he afterwards explained to one of the staff, for the purpose of abstracting from his great height and from the observation which it had led to amongst those with whom he had to associate.

He cut a singular figure when engaged in his occasional duties as a draughtsman at the table which was general to the rest of the staff, and to mitigate the inconvenience which must have attended his tallness in the performance of this part of his duties some special arrangements were made by which he might be able to keep a more upright position. Despite his great height, he is described as being as "straight as a poplar."

The general bearing of Mr. Dyson was that of a gentleman, and whether in conversation or written communication with those around him, he never bent from this position, and, as a consequence, commanded general respect.

When he took his engagement in York he dated from the Firs, near Rotherham, where he said that his wife was residing; and whilst he remained in the ancient city he lodged with a Mr. Waddington, of Holgate Lane.

He was engaged there for only about two months, much of the time being occupied in surveying various stations on the York and Whitby line.

He had at last been sent for this purpose to Grosmont Station, and as after his departure, as it was expected, for that place, nothing was heard of him for a fortnight, inquiry was made at Grosmont, and it was found that he had not been there.

This led to an intimation being sent to him at the address near Rotherham that his return to duty was not required, and to the termination of his engagement with the North-Eastern Railway Company.

Peculiarity was noticed about the unfortunate gentleman, which gave rise at the time to the impression that something preyed upon his mind, and he on more than one occasion, in intimating to one of his superiors a desire that he should be allowed weekly to visit his wife, hinted that he suffered from some domestic trouble.

What the nature of this domestic trouble was it is not easy to say.

Possibly it might be in some way connected with the mischievous, tormenting little rascal, Peace.

While the Dysons were at Darnall, Peace was a frequent visitor at their house.

Mr. Dyson, for some considerable time after his first becoming acquainted with Peace, conceived a certain amount of partiality for him, and, in consequence of this, Peace soon became on intimate terms with both husband and wife; his connection with the latter has never been clearly established.

It is, however, quite certain that his attentions to Mrs. Dyson were most marked and persistent.

She went about with him to various places of amusement, and was with him also at the Sheffield summer fair, 1876, and also at several public-houses—this was proved at the magisterial examination.

This familiarity with Peace greatly annoyed Mr. Dyson, who was a discreet, equably-disposed, well-conducted man.

He was greatly incensed at his wife's intimacy with Peace, and as time went on he spoke his mind pretty plainly, but Peace was not a man to be snubbed easily—he openly defied Mr. Dyson, and continued his persecutions of his erratic wife.

It is certain that for a considerable period he had a powerful hold of her—not of her affections, perhaps, but her vanity was such that she continued on friendly terms with him long after her husband had expressed his dislike to the man.

One afternoon she had been with him to his brother's public-house, where, it appears, there were singing and dancing.

She bent her steps in the direction of Darnall. Peace insisted on accompanying her, and as the pair were proceeding along they came in sight of a well-known roadside inn, with a garden in its front; here they stopped and had some refreshment.

"It's no use your thinking of giving me the cut, old woman," said Peace. "I'll stick to you while I've life, and I'm not going to be shunted."

"I wish you'd hold your tongue, or, at any rate, not speak so loud," cried his companion. "I never met with such a man in all my life."

"I am devotedly attached to you, and you know it," whispered Peace; "and nothing in the world shall make me give you up."

"You are talking like a fool."

"No matter about that—I'm saying what I mean. I tell you again, I won't be cast off. I love you too well for that. Do you hear?"

"I hear, of course; but I have a kind, good husband, and must not listen to your nonsense."

"It is not nonsense—it is the solemn truth. You don't know what sort of man you have to deal with. I would give up everything for your sake. Can a man say fairer than that?"

"I don't want you to give up anything for my sake. All I want is for you to keep at a respectful distance."

"Then I won't do anything of the sort!" cried Peace, in a fury, and making such a hideous grimace that his companion was frightened.

"I won't—not for you nor anyone else," he repeated in a louder tone.

"Do, for goodness' sake, mind what you are saying!" murmured his companion.

"I do mind, and I hope you do also. I tell you again, I won't give you up. We've been companions and friends for

a long time, and it is not because your stately, mighty big fellow of a husband has taken a dislike to me that our friendship is to cease. Listen; I've got a good lump of money, and it will be yours if you'll only consent to fly with me."

The woman burst out into a loud laugh.

"Fly with you!" she exclaimed. "You must be mad to make such a proposition. No, no, my friend; I know what is right and proper."

"I'll make you do so," he exclaimed, making another grimace, and regarding her with a malicious grin, which was more like that of a satyr than a human being.

He caught her by the arm, which he pinched with savage grip.

"Leave go!" she ejaculated. "What have I done that you should treat me thus?"

"I'll never leave you, never give you up as long as I have life," he returned.

"Oh! you tormenting man! I will not remain with you any longer."

"You shall!" he returned quickly. "You shan't leave; I won't let you. Don't think to get the better of me, my lady. You shan't go."

Mrs. Dyson gave utterance to a faint scream, when, to the surprise of her and her pertinacious companion, Mr. Dyson came in front of the arbour in which they were seated.

"What is the matter?" he inquired. Then, for the first time, catching sight of Peace, he said, in a tone of anger:

"How is it I find you, sir, annoying my wife again? I must request you to abstain from this unseemly conduct. If you do not, I shall take means to prevent you."

"Shut up!" cried Peace, "and mind your own business. This is a public place, and as such, I have as much right to be here as you. So shut up, I say!"

"You are an impertinent fellow," said Mr. Dyson, seizing him by the collar, and dragging him forcibly from the alcove, "and deserve a thrashing."

Peace slipped deftly from the grasp of his assailant, and retiring back for some little distance, he bent down his head, and rushed forward, making a full butt at him.

The attack was so sudden and unexpected, that Mr. Dyson fell to the ground with considerable force, and was for the space of a few minutes utterly powerless and prostrated.

One of the waiters of the establishment came to his assistance, helped him up, and there was a general expression of surprise and disgust at the cowardly action. A search was made for Peace, who had however, deemed it prudent to beat a retreat.

He was nowhere to be found.

"The contemptible, despicable little wretch!" exclaimed Mr. Dyson. "The spiteful, malicious scoundrel!"

"He is the torment of our lives, dear," returned Mrs. Dyson. "Oh, I do wish we could find means of being rid of the ruffian."

"I'll get a summons against him, and punish him, as he deserves to be punished."

"That's the best plan, sir," observed the landlord. "There are plenty of witnesses who can speak to the assault."

"The man is our evil genius, I do believe," said Mr. Dyson. "I have thought so for some time. He has been the bane of our existence, and has caused us more anxiety and trouble than I can at the present moment describe. He's a most venomous creature."

"He's a reptile, that's what he is!" cried Mrs. Dyson. "But, never mind, dear, we can take measures to bring him to justice."

Mr. and Mrs. Dyson returned home; the former was greatly disgusted with Peace's conduct, and upbraided his wife for having consented to be his companion. The latter offered every possible excuse, and said that it was no fault of hers, that she was afraid of him, that he was a dangerous, designing man, who persecuted her in a manner which was altogether unaccountable.

In his reply to this Mr. Dyson said she must have given him some encouragement, or he never would be so pertinacious.

After a wrangle Mr. Dyson left the house and proceeded in the direction of the line where his services were required, and his wife strove to calm herself as best she could.

Evening came on, and as she sat at her toilette in one of the upstairs rooms of her domicile, she was suddenly aroused by some sand or gravel being thrown violently against the window-panes of her bedroom.

She looked out and beheld Peace at the side of the house.

"What do you want now?" cried she, opening the window.

"You," he returned, whereupon he threw a pebble stone, round which a piece of paper was wrapped, into the open casement.

"Go about your business; I will have nothing to say to you," said Mrs. Dyson.

"Won't you? I know better than that. Read!"

She unfolded the paper, and read its contents, which were as follows:

"Don't flatter yourself that you can elude me. I am here, as you see, again. Come down, or it will be worse for you."

"Go away!" said Mrs. Dyson, looking out. "I don't want to have any conversation with you, and I positively refuse to come down."

"You do?" screamed Peace, making a face at her. "You refuse?"

"Most positively."

"I'll break into the house, and force you to hear me!" he cried, with a malicious grin. "You know enough of me that I am not likely to take such an answer. I will make you do what I wish."

"Oh, you horrible man!"

"Horrible—am I?" He drew a revolver from his pocket. "You will make me do something horrible if you don't mind," he ejaculated.

"I'll call my husband, and let him answer you," returned Mrs. Dyson.

"Your husband, the poor fool!" said Peace, in a jeering tone. "Do you think I am to be deceived? Your husband is far away. But if he were at home it would be much the same. Come down and let me in."

The wretched woman was so alarmed that she went down from the upper room and opened the front door.

"For mercy's sake, Peace, do go away—there's a good fellow. I must not and will not have anything to say to you, after your cowardly conduct."

He tormentingly laughed at this last observation.

He placed one arm round her shoulders, drew her towards him, and endeavoured to embrace her.

She was a powerful woman, and struggled desperately to release herself from his grasp.

A violent struggle ensued, in which Mrs. Dyson struck Peace repeatedly with her clenched fist; but his perseverance was beyond all bounds.

He fought like a demon, and his conduct, taken altogether, was like that of a perfect madman.

How long the conflict would have continued, and what would have been its issue, it is not possible to say, had it not been for unlooked-for assistance arriving.

A policeman, who happened to be passing, attracted Mrs. Dyson's attention. She called to him, and he at once came to the rescue.

"Take this man away," she said.

"Do you charge him?" inquired the constable.

"No. All I want of you is to take him away. Remove him from these premises."

"Now then, you sir," said the officer, "move on, or I'll lock you up."

He gave Peace a push, which sent him reeling.

"You keep your hands to yourself, and don't assault me," said he, "or I'll lodge a complaint against you; mind you that."

"Will you go? If you don't—well, I shall know what to do."

"You're a big man in your own estimation, but a very little one in everybody else's," returned Peace, who, however, thought it best to get clear off, and so, making mocking gestures as he went along, he went his way without further ado.

It was a great relief to Mrs. Dyson when he was out of sight; but she was not at all certain about his returning shortly.

However, he did not trouble her again that night.

This attack, together with a variety of others of a similar nature, was the reason the Dysons had for leaving Darnall.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

The Dysons found it impossible to shake off Peace, who continued his annoyances to them with a pertinacity which occasioned them the greatest possible trouble and anxiety.

Peace was irrepressible; he was most ingenious in the way of persecution.

He followed Mrs. Dyson about, threatened her, and watched outside the house to catch sight of her.

It was in vain that Mr. Dyson sent him a communication requesting a cessation of his visits. This, coupled probably with a discontinuance of Mrs. Dyson's friendship, seemed to

almost madden Peace, who swore to be revenged on them both. But too well did he carry out his wicked purpose.

In July, 1876, he threatened to blow out their brains, accompanying the threat with pointing a pistol at the head of Mrs. Dyson.

A warrant was taken out against him for this, but he evaded apprehension, while continuing to annoy the family, and on October 29 the Dysons removed to Bannercross, with the hope of being free from his disagreeable visits; but on the very night they removed Peace appeared at Bannercross and confronted Mrs. Dyson, saying in a malicious tone of voice, "You see I am here to annoy you, wherever you may go."

Mrs. Dyson remonstrated with him, and told him "he was a wretch."

Peace only laughed derisively at this, and said, "he was not to be shaken off, that he would follow her if it was to the end of the world."

When the Dysons first went to live at Eccleshall, some five weeks before the murder, Peace made it his business to wait upon the vicar, the Rev. E. Newman, to warn him against the new arrivals in his parish.

He then told Mr. Newman some most incredible stories, making grave charges which it would be indelicate and unjust to even hint at.

Mr. Newman was incredulous that things could be as Peace represented them, and asked him how it was that he had chosen to make such statements to an utter stranger.

"My object," promptly replied Peace, "is to put you on your guard."

It struck Mr. Newman at the time that there was something behind, but Peace persistently stuck to his story. As it was not believed he left the vicarage, stating that he would return with proofs such as would leave no doubt of his speaking the truth.

Just one month after this he went to Bannercross at eight o'clock in the evening, and perpetrated the murder for which he afterwards suffered death.

Peace proceeded to Sheffield the night after the trial of the unfortunate young man, William Habron, and he went to Bannercross in the evening.

At the back of the house where the Dysons lived, which was in one of the houses in the terrace called Bannercross Terrace, there was a low wall.

Peace wanted to see Mrs. Dyson—so he afterwards declared. He knew the house very well. He stood on the low wall at the back of the house. He was as well acquainted with the back premises as the front, and he knew that the bedroom was at the back.

For some time Peace's eyes were directed towards the apartment in question; presently he noticed a light at the window.

The blind was up, and he could, with tolerable distinctness, see her carrying a candle and moving about the room.

The guilty man watched her for some time, and saw that she was putting her boy to bed.

He then "flipped his fingers," as he termed it, and gave a sort of subdued whistle, to attract the attention of Mrs. Dyson, as he had frequently done before at different places.

PEACE TURNED ROUND AND FIRED TWICE.

He had not long to wait, the assumption being that she was aware of the presence of her tormentor.

Anyway, Mrs. Dyson left the bedroom, went downstairs, and entered the closet.

Peace had got down off the wall and gained the yard.

He then went towards the passage of the house.

According to his own statement, the only object he had in paying a visit to the house was to induce Mrs. Dyson to withdraw the warrant which had been taken out against him. Whether this was the real purport of his visit has never been clearly established—we have only his bare word for it, but that is not very reliable testimony. He said "he was tired of being hunted about, and not being able to go and come as he liked."

Mrs. Dyson, according to his account, became very noisy and defiant, and made use of fearful language against him.

Peace became angry, and taking his revolver from his pocket, he held it up in her face, and said:

"Now, you be careful what you are saying to me. You know me of old, and know what I can do.

"You know I am not a man to be talked to in that way.

"If there is one man who will not be trifled with by you or anybody else, it is Charles Peace."

She was highly incensed, and would not take warning, and continued to threaten Peace, who soon became wild with fury.

All the bad passions of the man were now dominant.

While loud and angry words were being exchanged, Mr. Dyson made his appearance.

It was most unfortunate for him that he came forward.

Peace threatened to shoot Mrs. Dyson, who took refuge in the closet.

Peace turned round and fired twice, the first shot striking the wall, and the second striking Mr. Dyson in the temple.

Peace saw the unfortunate gentleman fall, but was not aware at the time that he had received his death-wound.

His murderer rushed into the middle of the road, and stood there for a brief period, apparently hesitating as to his course of action.

He was, as may be readily imagined, under the greatest agitation, and as he observed a number of people gathering about, he at last decided to fly.

He jumped over the wall on the other side of the road, and as he did so a packet of letters fell from his pocket.

Mr. Dyson died in about an hour after he had been shot.

Peace managed to effect his escape.

How he contrived to get clean off has been a matter of surprise to everybody; and how he afterwards managed to elude the vigilance of the police and continue his lawless career in London and the suburbs, is still more surprising.

The following is his own version of his movements after the murder.

"I want it to be properly understood," says Peace, "that, from the moment I left Bannercross on September 29, 1876, I felt sure of making my escape.

"I felt I had no cause to do so, for I knew that I had done nothing wrong; for in the first place when it happened I came down the passage and stood in the middle of the road, not knowing what had happened.

"I did not know whether to run away or walk away, till I heard Kate (Mrs. Dyson) scream; and then not knowing what had happened, I took across the road and fields to Hentcleff (Endcliffe) Crescent. I then walked to Broomhill Tavern, and took a cab into Church Street.

"I then went to see my mother, and remained with her for more than half an hour. I then went down to the Attercliffe Railway Station, and took the train for Rotherham.

"I then booked from Masborough for Hull, but having got into the York part of the train (not knowing it) in place of the Hull part, when the Hull part of the train was liberated from the York part at Normanton I was taken forward to York.

"I remained at York in the Railway Hotel in the station yard all night. I took the first train next morning for Beverley. I took the next train for Cottingham. I went from Cottingham to Hull.

"I went to see my wife and family at 27, Collier Street; this would be about ten o'clock in the morning. I had been away from my family a fortnight, and was talking to them in the kitchen when I heard two dectives (detectives) talking to my wife in the shop, asking if a young man of the name of Peace lived there.

"My wife said 'Yes; but he has gone to Sheffield to see his grandmother,' thinking that they meant my son.

"But I in the kitchen, hearing this, felt that it must be me they meant, went upstairs into my son's bedroom, put the window up, and went between the two roofs of the building, and remained there till the detectives had searched the house, and when they had gone out I came back again into the kitchen of my own house, and took my things and began to wash myself; but before I could finish washing myself I heard them in the shop again, so I went upstairs through the windows between the roofs till they had searched the house and gone out again. So I then went down again into the kitchen.

"My wife and daughter were sobbing fit to break their heart, for they did not know what was the matter, and I could not tell them.

"So I washed me, and put on my clothes, and bid them all good-bye, and went out through the window again between the roofs. I remained there again for some hours, till just before dusk.

"I then went down the spout at the farther end of the building, which brought me into the next yard but one, and went to a woman's house that dealt at our shop, and told the woman I had to get away out of the shop over a warrant, or something of that, and asked her if she would go into our house and ask my wife to send me something out to eat, but mind the detectives did not hear and see her, and I had my tea in this woman's house.

"I then asked the woman to let me go through her kitchen window in her back yard and also to ask the woman in the next yard if she would let me go through her kitchen window and pass through the house into another yard.

"She went and asked and got consent, so that I went through the window and house into the other yard. This was three clear yards away from my house. It was then just dark.

"I walked out of the passage end, and turned to the left down Collier Street, towards the fair ground, and went away—but not out of the town—and got lodgings; and I remained in Hull for nearly three weeks, and done some places for money.

"I then left Hull and booked for Doncaster. I then booked from Doncaster to London. I then took the underground railway to Paddington, and booked from Paddington for Bristol. Bristol was the first place I saw a reward out for my apprehension.

"I remained in Bristol till January. I booked from Bristol to Bath. I stopped at Bath all night. I booked from Bath to Oxford, and in the carriage with me there was a police sergeant, on his way to Stafford Assizes. We rode and talked together to Dickcot Junction (Didcot Junction), and arrived there in the middle of the night.

"We slept together in the waiting-room for four hours, and then went forward to Oxford by first train. We then shook hands and parted; he went forward to Stafford and I remained at Oxford all day.

"I then booked for Birmingham. I remained at Birmingham four or five days. I then went on to Derby.

"I stopped at Derby at an eating-house oppersite the railway, and there was a young man there just joining the police force, and the police-station was not more than 150 yards from there. I remained at Derby for something more than a week.

"I then went to Nottingham, and took lodging at a little shop three or four doors from the police-station on the Burton Road, right oppersite a timber-yard where I was stopping, and the police-station is at the corner of Leanside.

"I remained with them till they left there, and went to live with them in a yard a bit lower down, that led out of Leanside into Narrow Marsh, but not more than fifty yards from the police-station.

"I remained with them some time, working Nottingham and the towns round about. I then went to live with Mrs. Adamson, a buyer, next door to the Woodman Inn, in Narrow Marsh. It was there I became acquainted with Mrs. Thompson.

"Upon one occasion I booked from Nottingham to Sheffield, but got out of the train at Ely (Heeley) station, and walking past the police-station at Highfield. Inspector Bradbury was stood at the police-station door, at about seven o'clock at night, and I passed close by him, and he did not know me.

"Then I went right away up to Sharrow, and crossed over quite close to Bannercross, down into Hesclehall (Ecclesall) Road, turned down towards Sheffield, and crossed through Broomhall Park, into Havelock Square.

"I that night did a house over at the corner of Havelock Square. They was away from home. I got about £6 in money and a lot of jewerley.

"The watchman on the beat fancied he heard something in the house, but I saw him stop the sergeant when he came his round, and I got away backwards. By certain papers I brought out of the house they called them Barney Swincourse (Barnascone). I went to Ely (Heeley) Railway Station, and from Ely to Nottingham.

"At Nottingham I done a big tailor and draper establishment, and took a lot of overcoats."

It was at the last-named place, as he declares in the above statement, that he met with the woman who played so conspicuous a part in Peckham.

Mrs. Thompson's name was Susan Gray, and she was lodging at a house where Peace had apartments.

It is said that she was married to a commercial traveller named Bailey, but discarded him for Peace; and it was while at Nottingham that a detective surprised them in the night.

There had been a robbery in the town, and the officer was in pursuit of the thief. Peace induced the constable to go downstairs, stating that he was a pedlar, and would bring down his pack for examination. He escaped, half dressed, through the window; and the officer, after waiting for some time, returned to find the bird flown.

(To be continued.)

which you resorted to the means you adopted proves to me, and it would be well if those who are attempting to commit such crimes should hear the warnings that are continually proceeding from the courts of criminal justice, that the very steps adopted by those who attempt to commit crime in secret do almost invariably prove the means of their exposure. The jury have recommended you to mercy. That is a matter with which I have nothing to do, but, of course, I shall forward it to the proper quarter. In the meantime I must exhort you not to entertain any false hopes, but as your life, each of you, stands forfeited to the law, to use the brief time that may remain to each of you to seek mercy where alone mercy can be found. It only remains for me to pass upon each of you the dread sentence of the law, which is that each of you be taken from hence to the place from whence you came, and from there to the place of execution, and that you be there respectively hanged by the neck until you respectively shall be dead, and that your respective bodies be afterwards buried within the precincts of the prison in which you may each have been last confined after your conviction. And may the Lord have mercy on your souls."

A petition was presented after the conviction to the Home Secretary, praying for the commutation of the sentence on the ground that the evidence connecting the female prisoner with the crime was slender, but it was decided that there was no reason for interfering with the course of the law. On the night of Sunday, January 11, 1874, Bailey made a full and free confession of his guilt to the chaplain of the gaol. He said his belief in infidel doctrines, combined with the annoyance he had received with regard to the child, led him to contemplate its destruction. He left a book for his wife containing a most pathetic farewell, and said that Barry had only been a tool in his hand, tempted by money.

Barry admitted that she knew what the powders were for when she purchased them, but denied that she had induced the mother to give the mixture to the child, asserting that she had gone to the house merely to find out something against the mother's character, which might enable Bailey to appeal against the affiliation order. Bailey and Barry were executed at Gloucester on Monday, January 12, 1874, together with Edward Butt, who had been found guilty at the same assizes of the murder of his sweetheart.

During the Sunday night previous to their execution the convicts slept well, but they rose at an early hour, and spent some time with the chaplain. Anderson, who acted as executioner, went to the cells soon after seven o'clock on the Monday morning, and at eight, after being pinioned, the prisoners were led into a spacious yard where the gallows had been erected. Here there were about sixty persons gathered, besides the officials. Barry was placed between the two men, and they all knelt in prayer with the chaplain. During this solemn service the woman's responses were partly audible. They all stood firm while the nooses were being arranged and the white caps placed on their heads, and appeared perfectly resigned to their fate.

Stepping back a few paces, Anderson stood on the left hand of the gallows for a few seconds, as if to admire the pose of the wretched beings he was about to launch into eternity, or perhaps to satisfy his mind that all was right. He then turned towards the handle of the lever, the pulling of which was to give the final stroke to the dreadful scene, and he seemed to eye it with some misgiving; but, clasping it firmly with both hands, he gave it a tremendous pull and threw the upper part of his body backwards at the same time in order to give additional force to his efforts to make clean work of it. There was heard a sharp click, a loud crash as of falling timber, a dull, heavy thud, a sharp twang of the receding flaps against the sides of the pit, a tightening of the cords, a convulsive movement of the bodies of all three, and the last sentence of the law had been carried out. Immediately Anderson saw the culprits descending he let go the bolt, raised his hands as though satisfied with the result, ran forward and looked into the pit, steadied one of the bodies, and then stood on one side among the officials, to some of whom he spoke a few hurried words, and then retired into the prison. There was a slight muscular movement after the bolt was drawn, but nothing more. Bailey died first, then Butt, and Barry last. Hundreds of persons gathered outside the gaol to see the black flag hoisted.

BARRY WAS PLACED BETWEEN THE TWO MEN.

POISONING OF THE Widow Dequisal BY THE ABBE GOTHLAND and MDME. DE SABLON IN FRANCE.

Diabolical deed committed by a Priest, assisted by his Mistress. Horrors of a Husband.

"What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?
I saw it not, it harm'd not me."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Othello."

NOT so long ago, my journalistic duties took me a good deal to France, and amongst the most enjoyable of the many pleasant trips was that to Cognac, the home of brandy, which quaint old town I visited annually for several years. Sometimes I would journey to the city of eau de vie by the London General Steam Navigation's service, viâ the beautiful Bordeaux; at others, across Channel, through Paris, and by the Orleans railway to Angoulême, where it was necessary to change lines to get on to Cognac, some thirty miles distant.

Apart from its interesting historic associations (for it was the home of Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre, the birthplace of Balzac and Montalembert), the town itself is a delightful little place, situate on the summit of a hill, and has appropriately earned for itself the title of the French Athens. I invariably made a halt at Angoulême for twenty-four hours, the place having quite a fascination for me, with its picturesque houses clustering upon the sides of the hill, the magnificent view obtained from the Rue d'Agnesseau of the valley of the Charente, the silvery streak of water stretching as far as the eye can reach through the beautiful vineyards, its Cathedral of St. Pierre—a Roman Byzantine edifice, perhaps the most curious in France—and last, but not least, the lively population of the bright little town, which can certainly, so far as gaiety goes, run Paris very close.

As a matter of fact, Angoulême has always boasted of a very fast set, and little wonder, for not only is it a cathedral town, which, of course, necessitates the presence of a number of priests, but it is also a garrison town, where a great many of the military are always quartered, a combination which, in France, never fails to lend an exceeding gaiety to a town, for the clergy in a place like Angoulême are very much to the front, and know how to enjoy life in every detail, it being no uncommon sight to see the clerical gentleman, with his jolly, red, clean-shaven face beaming beneath his broad-brimmed bowler, hobnobbing with the gaily-clad officers, and taking their share of enjoyment at the cafés.

And the ladies of Angoulême? Well, they have been—married and single—always a go-ahead set, and decidedly a bit loose. Little wonder as (perhaps more so formerly than now) every husband, if he could afford it, kept his mistress. So it was not surprising to find that the fair ones readily accepted the attentions of the gallant officers, and the clergy, especially the young fellows who were there training to become father confessors, and who had, consequently, many opportunities of captivating the hearts of the ladies who had either been neglected by their spouses or (as many Frenchwomen are) affected with a passion for more lovers than one. Consequently, there were many little affairs of the heart of more or less serious developments frequently coming to light before the public at Angoulême, the least important being enough to shock the feelings of an Englishman, but only to be smiled at by our friends on the other side of the Channel.

But even a Frenchman draws the line somewhere in affairs of this kind, and amongst the many romantic stories that were told me during my stays at Angoulême, there is one that is thrillingly dramatic and tragic enough to retell, for it will illustrate precisely how the gay citizens of the pretty town upon the Charente took their pleasures some half century ago.

In the autumn of 1849 there was quite a commotion at the little village of St. Germain, about ten miles from Angoulême, for to those in the quiet place quite an event was about to happen. A new curé was to be appointed in place of a young priest of whom it had been alleged took more interest in the ladies of the district than he did of the spiritual welfare of his flock. All kinds of rumours were current, and at length some of the scandals leaked out, the Bishop of Angoulême became acquainted with the state of affairs, and the priest was called upon to resign. Many were the sighs, and even tears, of some of the fair parishioners, for the young curé was such a "good young man," was so attentive and so handsome. But he had to say farewell, and, after he had departed, all were eager and curious to know what sort of man would take his place, for there was more than one who found a vacant place in their hearts, and the anxiety was to know how that should be filled.

Amongst those who were most anxious about the new priest were Madame du Sáblon, the wife of the physician of the district, an exceedingly beautiful young woman of barely thirty years, with one child, a boy of eleven. She mixed in the best society, and was most devout. Other ladies, friends of hers, who also took the keenest interest in the Church—and the priest of course—were Madame Marchadier and Mdlle. Elodie Doury, both renowned for their beauty.

In due course the newly appointed curé came and was introduced to his flock. His name was Laurent Gothland, and he was a fine young fellow of twenty-nine years of age. Jet black hair inclined to curl over his alabaster-like forehead, which was high and broad, indicating intellectuality. With rather heavy brows for a dark man, his piercing eyes when directed towards one seemed to read them through—just the sort of eyes to captivate a woman of a sensitive nature, and whose passions come readily to the surface. His acquiline nose and clear complexion of almost dazzling whiteness carried upon his cleanly-shaven cheeks and chin a bloom like that of a grape, whilst his mouth possessed those plump lips which usually indicate a sensual disposition.

"Oh, I think him charming!" exclaimed Madame Marchadier, as the three ladies walked home from the church after being presented to the newly appointed priest. "What do you think, Marie?" she inquired, turning to Madame du Sáblon. "You, now, are the best judge of all," she added, somewhat satirically.

But Madame Marie Laure du Sáblon made no answer. Yet a keen observer might have guessed what her reply would have been had she chosen to make it. A crimson blush flushed over her beautiful cheeks, and her long, dark lashes rested upon them for a moment as she dreamily closed her large, dark eyes. But she said nothing.

And the curé? He had turned from the church to his new abode close by, a plain, old-fashioned building, which was to serve as his rectory, with the face of Madame du Sáblon haunting him, and the thrill that she had shot from those beautiful eyes still tingling through his frame.

He had lost his heart in those few brief moments; or, at least, he had been impressed so deeply that the love seed grew apace and quickly burst forth into a flaming passion.

And Madame du Sáblon? Well, it was the same old story—but she was frail, very frail. And the village gossips had much to discuss, for madame became more devout than ever. She was seen walking home with the young curé, and people did say that she had been seen more than once entering the rectory, and had remained there longer than necessary to fetch away the books she had called for and to gather the winter roses which bloomed at the porch. And the old gravedigger, too, had shrugged his shoulders and placed his forefinger knowingly beside his nasal organ at the little village estaminet where the gossips met, as he told how he had surprised madame and the curé coming out of the church together long after the moon had risen and thrown its pale light into the confessional box, which door was open.

Things went on much the same for a few months, but Madame du Sáblon spent less time with her husband and little boy, and the village had more to talk about every day. The curé had found it necessary to engage a housekeeper, and madame insisted upon the selection. Naturally, the party engaged would not be young, nor would she be of too engaging a disposition. So a widow from Angoulême named Déquisal was taken into service. She was an excellent servant, but undoubtedly possessed a sour temper, and was, perhaps, a little too straight-laced for the occupation of such

a situation. A woman who would have made a model housekeeper for a clergyman of the Church of England, but decidedly not the sort of person to remain in the service of the Abbé Gothland.

Besides, the Widow Déquisal possessed an inquisitive turn of mind, and was not at all above playing the eavesdropper. So she discovered much more of the goings-on between her patroness and her lover than the pair, intoxicated to blindness with their passion, ever dreamed of.

At last, however, "all the fat was in the fire." One day the curé returned home, and, being in an ill-temper, he corrected the widow for some fault, which led to words between them, resulting in the housekeeper being told to leave.

Not so quickly, though, Monsieur le Curé! The woman knew something, had seen something, and told him when and how. So the priest, as pale as death, affected a calmness which he did not possess, and the Widow Déquisal stayed on. But not for long. Truly, she had presents made to her, and her wages was increased, whilst her son was written to saying how delighted the curé was with the ser-

Coming out of the Church together.

vices of his mother. And the young man was pleased to hear what a favourite she had become. But his pleasure turned to suspicion when his mother told him what she had observed and of the scene which had taken place between her and the curé. Still he persuaded his parent to remain in the service, but asked himself day after day what all this increased kindness meant, but could find no answer.

At last news came to him that fell like a thunderbolt. He received a letter from the Abbé Gothland stating that his mother had died suddenly of brain fever, and that decomposition had set in so rapidly that he had been compelled to have the body interred at once. Would he come over and receive her belongings and the wages due to her?

The young fellow was dumbfounded. Post-haste he went to St. Germain, and, on having an interview with the curé and Madame du Sáblon, their strange manner convinced him that there had been foul play. Without a word he went to the authorities at Angoulême and placed the matter before them. It was discovered that the body had been buried twelve hours after death, in no case interment — unless by special licence from the Government being obtained—being allowed before the expiration of twenty-four hours by the law of France. Thereupon the body was, on December 28, exhumed, the widow having died on the 21st of that month.

On a post-mortem being made, arsenic was discovered, and, suspicion falling upon Gothland, he was arrested, and the most startling evidence produced against him, which also implicated Madame du Sáblon. After the examination of the curé he was thrown into prison, committed to take his trial for murder, whilst the woman was shunned by everybody and pointed at as an accomplice, her own husband alone standing by her and avowing her innocence. So serious did the situation become respecting the physician's wife that the magistrates (a custom in France) determined upon visiting Sáblon's house for the purpose of interrogating madame.

The magisterial descent was to be made on February 5, 1850, not until a month after the curé's arrest. The agony of mind that the woman suffered during those long four weeks nobody will ever know. She aged in appearance ten years. Again and again her husband asked her to make a clean breast of it to him, but she swore by her sacred ties of matrimony and before her God that she was innocent. And the poor man believed her.

"Then," said he, "there is only one thing left for us—death before dishonour!"

"Mon Dieu!" shrieked the woman. "What would you have me do? No, no, not death! I am not good enough to die! Then you—you and my darling boy!"

"Die with you," calmly interrupted the man. "I have talked for a long time with my poor son. He is very young, but old enough to know. He consents, and we die together this evening. To-morrow it will be too late. The magistrates will be here. You can never face the ordeal. Come, sit you down, and let me read these letters to you. Then, if you have anything to write, do so. Then—then prepare."

With trembling voice, M. du Sáblon read the following letters to his wife:

"My dear Sister,—You know that I said in my last letter that if God reserved me for more terrible trials than I had supported, I should require greater strength. Well, the misfortunes have arrived, and the strength fails me. I see my wife and myself—perhaps although perfectly innocent—menaced with an infamous condemnation. I know not why we, innocent as we swear we are by our hope of salvation, which our act will compromise, should give ourselves as a sight to the stupid populace, who would not fail to rejoice at seeing us sent to the hulks or the scaffold. A voluntary death seems to me preferable, and I hope that I and mine will be delivered by it from an execrable world, in which calumny is so powerful that no honest man can be sure of not sharing out fate. I die with the conviction that my wife is pure and innocent—my resolution proves this. I have only one regret, and that is to sacrifice with us a being who is so dear to both. But reassure yourself; although very young, he has firmness, and accepts our proposition with courage. Strength fails me. I can only tell you that I regret you all, and that I beg of you to pray God for me. I desire that out of the little we leave behind a sum, destined to say a mass every year for our souls, be taken. Be more happy than we. Adieu for ever!

"Coquet du Sablon."

"My dear Parents,—Preferring death to infamy, and seeing that I cannot avoid the latter, I have recourse to death. I regret to abandon you thus in your old age, but the conduct of the magistrates proves that my wife is judged in advance, so that I prefer to make an end. I give to my nephew, Edmond, all that I may leave behind me. Remember, this is the wish of a dying man, and respect it. I owe nothing to anyone except the following: [Here he gave some details of his affairs.] I am very unhappy at being obliged to take such a determination, especially as regards my poor child; but I hope God will pardon us. We are innocent, and we can swear that at the moment of appearing before our God, who sees our conduct, and who, I hope, will be merciful to us. I request that we may all three be interred in the same grave—my wife and I side by side and our child placed on us. Poor creature! my heart breaks whilst thinking of the lot I have brought him. But I prefer it to that which would be otherwise reserved for him, as well as for his mother. If he lived infamy would follow him everywhere—at least, we prevent that for him; he will not support it. God pardon us, and you also. But courage failed us at seeing ourselves so overwhelmed, although innocent. The enemies who have driven us to this sad necessity will not fail to rejoice and call us guilty. But what will that matter to us? I

embrace you all, and beg of you all to believe I suffer keenly at having recourse to such remedy.—Your son,

"COQUET DU SABLON."

Madame du Sáblon clutched her husband's arm during the reading of those letters, and her face was like marble. Mechanically she touched the bell, and walked across the room to her desk. Hurriedly scribbling the following note, she handed it to her servant to take at once:

"To Madame Marchadier,—My dear Elise,—I write to you for the last time to say good-bye to you and Elodie Doury. I am innocent of what I am accused, but it is hard to be suspected. I have my conscience for me, but I am none the less happy. Farewell.—

"MARIE LAURE DU SABLON."

M. du Sáblon arises, and silently takes her hand and that

And the two women gallop the pair of horses over the road to their friend's house, which is only about a couple of miles away, and are there in a very short time. Entering the house, after repeatedly knocking, by having the door forced by a blacksmith who lives near, they find the door leading to the bedchamber also locked, and the boots and shoes of the family placed upon the bottom step of the stairs.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" exclaimed Madame Marchadier, "some misfortune has happened. Force the door! Quick! quick!"

What a sight presents itself to their gaze as soon as one of them has rushed to the window and opened it and the fumes are somewhat dispersed! Upon the sofa lies Du Sábron. His eyes are starting from his head, which hangs over the side, almost touching the ground, and white froth is oozing from his mouth. His wife has slipped upon the floor, where she lies all huddled in a heap, whilst the boy upon the bed seems as if in a peaceful slumber.

GIVES HIM ONE LONG, LINGERING KISS.

of his boy. Slowly they walk at a funeral pace to a room. In it there is a bed and a couch. No lamp is in the apartment, but it is lighted by the lurid glow from three pans of burning charcoal, and the face of Madame du Sáblon looks devilish in the red light with its scared expression, whilst that of her husband and of her unhappy boy are peaceful. Lifting his son gently upon the bed, he gives him one long, lingering kiss, closes the door, which has flannel nailed around the apertures, then kisses his wife, and, throwing himself upon the couch, covers his face with his hands to hide the tears which are fast trickling down his cheeks. The only words he utters are, "Courage! courage!" And his wife sinks upon a footstool beside the couch, and, with her hands clasped above her head, rests her face upon her husband's knees. All is silent within the house of the physician.

* * * * * *

Madame Marchadier receives her friend's letter, and, as the servant can tell her nothing, she rushes off to the residence of Mdlle. Doury, which is close by.

"Elodie—quick—quick! Read this! Get the carriage! Let us go at once to St. Germain. Perhaps it will not be too late!"

Catching the child up in her arms, Madame Marchadier carries him to the window, and shrieks for help. "Thank God!" she cries, as she hears a long-drawn sigh from the hitherto apparently lifeless boy, "one is saved!"

Then Mdlle. Doury, with a shriek of delight, finds that the woman is not yet dead. But the physician on the sofa seems past all succour. By this time there are several people in the room, and the sofa is wheeled to the open window, whilst artificial respiration is attempted. They are at last rewarded, for with a groan which passes through the whole of his frame the unhappy Coquet du Sáblon returns to consciousness and to his miserable fate.

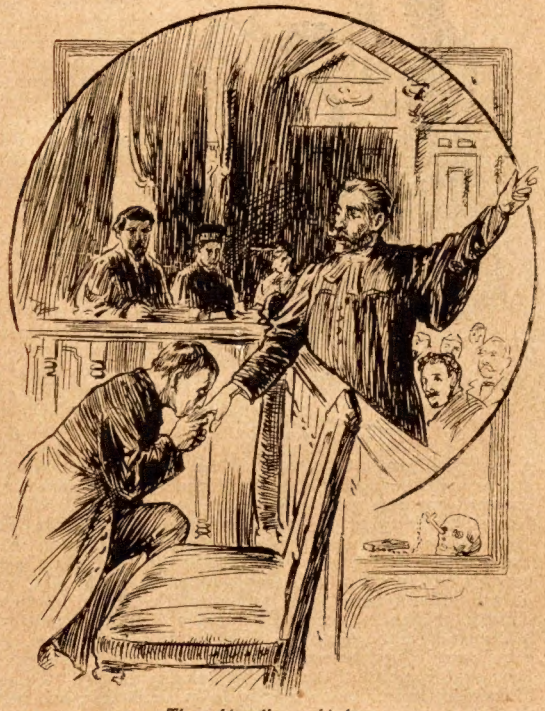
Of course, the attempted suicide is quickly made known about in all its details, and the magistrates, more convinced than ever now, immediately sign a warrant for the woman's arrest, and she, after examination, is committed to take her trial with her paramour.

At the opening of this extraordinary trial the excitement is intense. Crowds come from near and afar—from Bordeaux, Perigueux, Cognac, Poictiers, and other towns and villages, whilst it is found necessary to line the streets of Angoulême with the military to keep back the people during the time

that the prisoners walk from the prison to the court. Madame du Sáblon had petitioned to be allowed a conveyance, but the privilege was denied her, so she walked, leaning upon the arm of her husband, dressed in deep mourning and wearing a long veil. Had it not been for his presence there would undoubtedly have been a scene, but the crowd respected the poor man's feelings, and the little procession passed along quietly, groans only being heard as the Abbé Gothland appeared and walked along between the gendarmes.

Without giving a detailed account of this celebrated trial, it will be better to cull from the indictment, which gives the gist of the whole crime and the progress of its unravelling, both during the magisterial inquiry and by the Procureur during the period before the trial. Here it is compressed:

On the evening of December 21 Widow Déquisal died at the house of the Curé of St. Germain, after an illness of six days. At six o'clock the next morning the curé went to the mayor of the district and requested an authorisation to bury the corpse at once, declaring that it was rapidly decomposing. The mayor complied, and the curé caused the body to be buried on the same day. On his return from the cemetery he wrote to the deceased's son, Edmond Déquisal, saying that



Threw himself upon his knees.

his mother had died of congestion of the brain. Surprised at the sudden death and hasty burial, the son suspected foul play, and on the 28th he communicated his suspicions to the Procureur of the Republic at Angoulême. That functionary went the next day to St. Germain, and had the body exhumed.

On examination by medical men and chemists arsenic was found, and it appeared probable that it had been administered at different times. It thus became evident that the deceased had either committed suicide or been poisoned. But she had no reason to feel tired of her life, as she was in no danger of losing her place (the curé having just increased her wages and written to her son to say that he was much pleased with her); and, besides, the place was of no consequence to her, as both her son and daughter were tenderly attached to her, and were in a position to supply all her wants. It was, moreover, shown that she had never on any occasion procured poison. Thus, then, said the indictment, she could not have committed suicide, and consequently she must have been murdered.

But by whom? Evidently only by the Curé Gothland and Madame du Sáblon, for they alone had interest in her death. This interest arose from the fact that the honour of both was in her hands, she having discovered that an adulterous connection existed between them.

The Curé Gothland, it appeared, had at first been curate at Sémur, but had been indicted by the Bishop of Antun on account of immoral conduct. On the prayer of the Superior of the seminary, the bishop consented to appoint him to the curacy of Charolles, but he there caused such scandal by his relations with a Madame Allier that he was expelled. After a while, he presented himself to the Bishop of Angoulême, and, having deceived that prelate as to his past conduct, was appointed by him curé of the parish of St. Germain.

At Germain Madame Sáblon was his nearest neighbour, and they soon became very intimate. It had been proved that they passed much of their time alone at the parsonage, and that letters were constantly exchanged. The widow Déquisal suspected what was going on, but to convince herself, she enlarged a hole which happened to be in the curé's bedroom ceiling, and placed herself in the garret above.

Greatly shocked at what she saw, she notified to her son her intention of leaving the curé's service, but he told her to take no notice. After a while, she had a quarrel with the curé, and he threatened to beat her. "Take care, Monsieur le Curé," she said; "I know something."

"What do you know?" he exclaimed. "Tell me—tell me!"

"Well, then, I know you carry on with Madame du Sáblon!"

With this the curé became calm. He offered her money, which she refused, and he then wrote to her son saying how pleased he was with her, and that he had increased her wages. Whilst he was thus engaged with Madame Sáblon, he kept up a correspondence with Madame Allier at Charolles, and he protested to her that he loved her better than he did Madame du Sáblon, and that he had to resist the advances of the latter. He once, on pretence of visiting his family, went to Charolles, and for fifteen days was secreted by Madame Allier in her house. During his absence Madame du Sáblon was jealous, and opened letters which arrived for him.

On December 16, the Widow Déquisal was suddenly seized with violent vomitings after dinner, and these continued on the following days. Madame du Sáblon sent her soup and medicines from her own house. The curé prepared her sugared wine, and sat up with her. She took nothing except what passed through their hands, and during five days they kept administering poisonous substances. The way in which the poison was obtained was this: Dr. du Sáblon had a collection of medicines in his house, in his professional capacity. Among them was a phial containing 60 grammes of arsenic. Of these 14 grammes had been employed in killing rats. When the phial was examined by the magistrates, only 25 grammes remained; consequently, 21 grammes were missing, and they could, it was asserted only have been taken by the female prisoner, as she alone had access to the key of the chest in which her husband kept the poison.

The indictment further dwelt on the fact that the accused had the strongest possible interest in getting rid of the deceased, inasmuch as a word from her would have caused the one to be ignominously expelled from the Church, and the other to be dishonoured as a wife and a mother.

The main points included in this accusation having been proved beyond doubt by several witnesses, the case looked very black indeed against them both, but when the Procureur delivered his requisitory, the husband and friends of Madame du Sáblon breathed a little more freely, and fancied they saw a gleam of hope.

In a most elaborate manner counsel dealt with the charge, contending that it was clearly proved that deceased died from poison administered by the curé, that Gothland had poisoned her because she had discovered and revealed the secret of his adulterous connection with Madame du Sáblon, and that the latter had supplied the poison. Then counsel said, "I am, however, disposed to believe that it was not without hesitation that madame acted under the influence of her seducer, and I can, therefore, understand that indulgence should be shown her."

There was a buzz of approbation when these words were uttered by the prosecuting counsel, and it was whispered about that, after such a statement, the woman would get off very lightly, and when M. Deséze, her counsel, appealed on her behalf, the feeling in her favour was considerably strengthened.

He declared that madame's guilt was an assumption. There was no proof of the adultery, no proof that she touched her husband's arsenic, and he declared that what soup she made for the deceased was carried to her by her own child, and would she be likely to entrust him with poison, knowing that, child-like, he would probably taste of it?

In an awed tone he said that it was too terrible to contemplate that deceased had seen them in the commission of adultery, and he called attention to what he termed the purity of Madame du Sáblon's whole previous life, the manner in

which she had been brought up, and the love her husband still had for her. Her attempt to commit suicide might be considered an indication of guilt by some, but in his eyes it was the strongest demonstration of innocence, for it arose from an exaggerated sentiment of honour. Her husband, when he attempted to die with her, must have known whether she was guilty or innocent. He thought her innocent, and such was that man's professed conviction still.

There was applause after counsel's speech, and the woman sobbed pathetically, and consequently earned a deal of commiseration.

Not to be outdone by his brother barristers, and with a determination to go one better than he who had appealed so successfully for the woman, M. Georgeon, who held the brief for Gothland, made one of the cleverest and most extraordinary speeches ever uttered in a French criminal court or elsewhere. After trying to convince the jury that the deceased committed suicide, he attacked the poor deceased woman's character in a most vile manner. The learned counsel then had the audacity to tell the jury in the coolest possible manner that he had exculpated his client. Then, turning to the priest at the dock next to him, he delivered the following in the most commanding tone of voice:

"Accused Gothland, the moment has now come to restore to you the sacred character of which you ought never to have been deprived. Go forth, purified, from this court, in which you entered covered with ignominy, and stricken with reprobation!

"For the first time I restore to you the title which I have not given to you since the commencement of the case.

"Priest Gothland, on your knees! Kneel, I tell you, but not to demand pardon from justice or from that cruelly-tried family whose sorrows you did not occasion! Kneel to render thanks to God who, after having approached the cup of bitterness to your lips, in expiation of your faults, at last permits, in His inexhaustible mercy, your innocence to shine forth; and you will in consequence recover your liberty, for, in entering this place justice was promised you!"

But this extraordinary and audacious speech, accompanied as it was by the most theatrical action (the priest seizing counsel's hand and bursting into tears over it as he threw himself upon his knees) did not have the desired effect with the jury after the president had closed the trial with his remarks.

The verdict was "Guilty," with extenuating circumstances, for the Priest Gothland, whilst that of "Acquittal" was returned for Madame du Sáblon, who staggered from the dock and fell fainting into her husband's arms.

The perpetrator of this diabolical crime was sentenced to the galleys for life, whilst his lucky accomplice was restored to her husband and son; but to happiness—never. And this is how they managed things in France!

After Many Years.

ONE of the racecourse rifraff was recently hauled before a certain magistrate who is known to have a considerable affection himself for the "sport of kings." This was a flagrant case, however, and the "beak" was very severe with the culprit. "First," he said, addressing the smartly-dressed prisoner, "you rob this man, then you assault him; then you say he struck you, and try to fix the blame on him. It's no case for a fine. I shall send you to prison for ten days."

"Right you are, sir," said the imperturbable sport; "I don't mind takin' a bit o' time from you. When me and my mate, Bill Rossiter, was a-makin' a snide book at Epsom in Merry Hampton's year you comes and 'aves, as luck would 'ave it, a tenner on the winner with us. We does a guy, and you don't get no oof, though it started at 100 to 9. I feels as 'ow I owes you that ten days!"

The Magistrate's Test.

A MAN was brought up at one of the London police courts and charged with stealing a gold watch from a lady as she was entering a 'bus. The prisoner asserted that the watch was his, and the lady was quite mistaken in identifying it as her property. Suddenly the magistrate said, "Where is the key?"

The prisoner felt in his pockets, and said he must have left it at home. The magistrate asked him if he was in the habit of winding the watch with the key. "Yes, your worship," replied accused; "I've wound it every night for more than a twelvemonth."

Then the magistrate produced a key from his waistcoat pocket, and, passing it and the watch to the prisoner, said, "Just wind the watch up now, will you?"

The man opened the case, but was unable to find any place to use the key, as the watch was a keyless one!

"I'll send you to the sessions for trial," said the owner of the watch-key, and the prisoner was removed, protesting.

RICHARD COATES

Who was a Soldier but not a Man.

"And these men do they venture to call soldiers. I ask you, do soldiers make war upon women and wreak their vengeance upon innocent children . . ? Are they not rather murderers and ministers of Hell?"
—W. E. GLADSTONE, Speech on the Bulgarian Atrocities (1877).

RICHARD COATES, the artilleryman. Of all the crimes which disgraced the year 1874—and they were many and varied—the deed of which this man was guilty was the most foul and the most horrible. That year was rendered infamous by the perpetration of very many revolting deeds. At Liverpool a man named Thomas Corrigan was hanged for the brutal murder of his own mother, and Mary Williams and Jane Flanagan suffered death for a fearful double assassination in that town. Three persons, named Edward Butt, Edwin Bailey, and Ann Barry, murdered a young child near Gloucester, in the early part of the year, and were hanged together, while Francis Stewart inhumanly drowned her own grandson to spite its parents, and was hanged at Newgate. James Godwin, James Gibbs, and John Coppen were noted wife-murderers in the same year, and particularly brutal were the deeds of Hugh Daly, who beat his victim with a poker for two hours until he died, and Thomas Chamberlain, who, without motive, killed John Cox Newett, at Northampton. All this in 1874, and when we also record the murder of his sister by William Jackson, and the slaying of his sweetheart by Robert Taylor, enough has been said to establish the fact beyond dispute that "George Frederick's year," as the racing folks would say, had quite its fair share of degraded criminals.

But Coates, the good-looking, well-educated, and apparently agreeable young soldier, far surpassed them all in the atrocity of his crime, and his evil deed is not likely soon to be forgotten.

So truly terrible are the details of this tragedy that I feel that some apology is due to readers af FAMOUS CRIMES for its inclusion in this series, but the case attracted such widespread attention and excitement at the time, and led to so much discussion, that my editor did not feel justified in altogether ignoring an event so full of painful sensation. I shall, however, relate this dreadful episode with a due regard to the feelings of my readers, and some of the grosser details I shall wilfully suppress. For the rest, my story is true, and pity 'tis, 'tis true!

In the winter of 1874 Richard Coates, a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery, was quartered at Purfleet, where he acted as schoolmaster to the children of the married soldiers. He was just over twenty-one years of age, and of good address and prepossessing appearance. His father had also served in this branch of our military force, and had, some years before this sad event, retired from the service with a pension. Young Coates bore a very fair character with his battery, although he was addicted too much to a social glass, and spent a good deal more time than he should have done and more money than he could afford in the regimental canteen. Still, he was popular rather than otherwise

with his fellows, and was regarded as a promising young soldier, likely, with his superior education, to get on in the army. He had at one time risen, I believe, to the rank of bombadier, but in a drunken fit he had been induced to desert, and when he was arrested and sent back to his brigade his stripes were taken away from him, though he was given no other punishment. As I have said, Richard Coates taught some of the younger "children of the regiment" at the military school at Purfleet, and amongst his pupils was a young child named Alice Bonghen, who was nearly six years old. She was the daughter of a retired soldier residing in the neighbourhood, and had an intelligence beyond her tender years.

On December 9, 1874, Alice Bonghen and her little brother attended the barrack school as usual, going there at two o'clock for the afternoon lessons. Coates sat down by the fire, taking the child upon his knee, and proceeded to instruct her in her letters, but about three o'clock he was observed to whisper to his little pupil, who thereupon asked

THE MISSING CHILD WAS FOUND.

his permission to retire into the yard. He consented, and she trotted out, being followed a few moments afterwards by her soldier-teacher, who was away from the schoolroom for about fifteen minutes. What transpired only became known when this fiend gave his confession to the world, but it is certain that when he returned he made some remark on the fact that Alice Bonghen had not come back to continue the lessons.

"Has Alice been back?" he asked one of the scholars; and, receiving an answer in the negative, he gave her cloak and hat to her small brother to take home, and dismissed the children for the day.

When little Bonghen returned home without his sister, her parents felt some alarm, and the child not returning during the evening, the fact that she was missing was reported to the commanding officer, a Captain Wood, who ordered a thorough search to be commenced at once, and himself took part in it. Many of the soldiers volunteered, and amongst them the man Coates, who seems to have been, not unnaturally, regarded with some suspicion. One of the first places visited was the yard attached to the barrack schoolroom, and particular search was made in the lavatory therein. All that was found there was a blood-stained pocket-handkerchief; but this was instantly recognised by the distressed mother as her little daughter's property, and suspicion grew that the missing infant had met with foul play. Early the next morning all doubt was set at rest, for the search being recommenced and prosecuted with the utmost energy, a most frightful discovery was made at about half-past ten o'clock. The body of the missing child was found lying just within the high iron railings of the barracks and close to the water-side. The body was lying on its back and much of it exposed, while a medical examination disclosed the fact that she had been subjected to the most fearful and indescribable violence. The outrage was of such a nature as of itself to ensure death, but there were other injuries about the face and body, and the skull was fractured. The skin was bruised, as though the features had been battered by the powerful fist of a man, and altogether the corpse presented a truly pitiable and horrifying appearance.

Circumstances strongly pointed to Richard Coates as the inhuman murderer of this innocent child. He had followed her to the yard at the back of the barrack schoolroom, his clothing was found to be blood-stained, his jacket and trousers were wet, as though he had made efforts to sponge out some incriminating marks, and on his military great-coat was found a long hair, which exactly corresponded to the pretty brown locks of the little victim of this barbarity. It was believed that Coates could have had plenty of opportunities during the previous evening to remove the body from the closet in the yard to the spot where it was found, and indeed a boy came forward who stoutly declared that about seven o'clock he had seen a soldier, resembling Coates in height, walk, and build, returning from the place where the remains were discovered. This spot was about three hundred yards distant from the school-house, and it would be quite possible for the murderer to carry the body of his victim under his overcoat, and to place it where it was found. Even the sheets in the man's bed were slightly stained with blood, as was the window-sill close by, and the flooring.

Altogether, there appeared to be material for a very strong case against Richard Coates, and though he made some protestations of innocence, he was placed under arrest, and charged with the crime. Ultimately, he was fully com-

mitted for trial, which took place at Chelmsford before the then Lord Chief Justice, and extended over three days, commencing March 5, 1875.

Coates, who looked well, and was dressed in uniform, pleaded "Not guilty" in a loud and confident tone, and throughout the proceedings manifested great self-possession and resolution.

James Bonghen, a pensioner, said that he was the father of the murdered child, and he proceeded to describe her disappearance and the subsequent search for her on the previous 9th of December.

Captain Wood stated that he first learnt of the child's unaccountable absence at eight o'clock in the evening of the 9th, and he at once ordered a thorough search to be instituted. In this the accused man took part—with no apparent reluctance—and he was with them when the lavatory in the school-yard was examined. The prisoner seemed inclined to hurry the search in this particular place, and declared that there was nothing there; but the witness noticed a white handkerchief lying in a corner, and ordered Coates to bring it out. There was a large pool of blood on the floor of this place, and he called the attention of the prisoner to the fact. A little later, he ordered the accused to be searched, and blood was found on several of his garments, including his shirt.

Sergeant Brown declared that he observed the prisoner's trousers to be very wet on the evening of the murder, and that a long brown hair was found on his overcoat, which resembled in colour and in texture the hair of the dead child. Dr. Butt spoke as to the terrible nature of the injuries inflicted upon the deceased, which he described as "unheard of except amongst the very lowest tribes of savages," and referred at some length to the nature of the blood-stains found upon the clothing of the prisoner. An important witness was an intelligent lad named Owen, who declared that he had seen a soldier—remarkably like Richard Coates in appearance—walking away from the spot where the body was found at a little after seven on the evening of the 9th. The man he saw had his overcoat buttoned closely round his neck, but his arms were not in the sleeves, and he was walking hurriedly, and apparently trying to escape observation.

The counsel for the Crown having summed up the case to the jury, Mr. Wightman Wood proceeded to address them in defence of the young soldier, who still presented an undaunted front, and faced the crowded court with respectful firmness. But what could the finest forsenic skill advance that could materially shake the solid wall of facts built up by the prosecution? Mr. Wood did his best, and expatiated on the fallibility of circumstantial evidence. There were weak links, he declared, in the chain of evidence against the prisoner. The prosecution had not been able to say where the body of the child had been hid prior to its being placed by the barrack railings, and its possession had not been traced to the accused man, who had given an accurate account of his movements on that day.

The jury were an hour engaged in considering their verdict, so it would seem that Mr. Wood's arguments had had some weight with them, although a verdict of "Guilty" was what Mr. Martin Harvey would call "the only way" out of the matter put before them. Guilty it was, and Coates was sentenced to death, merely remarking as he prepared to leave the dock, "Tell my parents that I don't fear to die, and that I shall face death as a soldier should."

This barbarous murderer—for such we know him to be—was hanged at Springfield County Gaol, near Chelmsford, on March 29th, 1875, and towards the last, when all hope of a reprieve was gone, he expressed great remorse for the crime, and in a letter besought the forgiveness of the victim's parents. That he really felt an abhorrence of his atrocious act I am fully persuaded, and at the last he displayed a fortitude and a resignation to his fate not unworthy of one who had worn the uniform of the great Queen.

Marwood was the executioner, and when at a few minutes before eight o'clock the hangman entered the condemned cell, the criminal betrayed no signs of trepidation. He was now attired as a convict, in the hideous "broad-arrow" uniform of crime, but he stood up firmly when requested to do so, and remained erect and steadfast to the end. He admitted the justice of his sentence, and expressed a fervent hope for mercy in the hereafter.

His confession contained so much that was truly horrible that I am unable to give anything but extracts from it in these columns. I may say that the murderer appeared to find relief in giving vent to the fullest of confessions, and his statement left nothing to the imagination. He described in plain language the whole atrocious deed, and from his account it became known that, after killing the child, he placed the body under a wooden framework which ran along the whole length of the schoolhouse lavatory. He said, "I lost all my self-command, and I struck her some violent blows, and I found that she was dead. I did not know what to do with the body, and I placed it under the wooden seat and returned to the school. I sent the youngsters home, but I cannot recollect if any of them stopped in the yard to play or not. I went to my room and washed, and then went with Chisbrook and Hannah, who were examined at the trial, to the canteen, and remained with them till it was quite dark. I then left them and returned to my room, and after being there a short time I got on my great coat and carried her out of the front gate down to the railings by the river. I tried to throw her over, but failed to do so in consequence of her being so heavy and the palings so high. I then dropped her down and left her. The whole act was done as I stated. I think I stunned her first with the blows on the face and forehead. I had no more thought of doing harm to that poor little child until drink overcame me and bereft me of my senses."

Coates admitted before the execution that the boy Owen was correct in saying that he had met him returning from the spot when the body was found, and he explained that some of the injuries on the lower part of the corpse were caused by it catching on the spiked railings when he was endeavouring to throw the body over into the water. He also stated that he had got his clothes wet when out in a boat on the river the morning of the murder, and that he had "had a lot of spirits on the top of beer."

But what a deed! Can anything be advanced in extenuation of such a black and hideous atrocity?

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Helene Jegado.

THIS was a Breton woman, who was tried at the Assize Court of Rennes and executed in that town. She was a cook by profession, and killed for the mere sake of killing, mixing arsenic in the entrees and laudanum in the soup for the mere joy of the thing and to gratify her murderous impulses. She occupied many situations, and went from one to the other, always leaving a victim or two behind her. She also poisoned at least two of her lovers, for she was a lascivious wretch and a prey to all the baser passions. The deaths of no less than forty persons were laid "at the door" of Hélène Jegado, who has been described as a pretty, fair, buxom woman with peculiarly bright eyes.

Mistaken Identity.

THE Beck case has shown the need of caution when one has to speak on oath, but previous examples of mistaken identity amply testify to this. Some time ago a robbery was committed near Buckingham Palace by a man who called to look at some apartments. Some articles of value were stolen from the rooms, and the strange visitor was, of course, suspected. A servant girl was taken to the police-station to identify the caller at the house, but instead of picking out any of those in custody she persisted in fixing upon a gentleman present, and swore positively that he was the man who had inquired about rooms. He was accordingly arrested and remanded without bail, but on the following day was discharged, overwhelming evidence being produced of his respectability, and that he was miles away from the place at the time of the robbery

Replies to Queries

LAVISLAS.—The man you mean was John Edward Irving, a swindler, who passed himself off as "Canon Duckworth" in 1878, and was sentenced to five months' hard labour.

ENQUIRER.—Yes, Arthur Orton, The Claimant, had a sister who was sentenced to seven years' penal for numerous robberies. She called herself "Miss Mina Jury," and was convicted in 1876.

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